

**PART OF SOMETHING LARGER THAN OURSELVES:
GEORGE H.W. BUSH AND THE RHETORIC OF THE FIRST U.S. WAR IN
THE PERSIAN GULF**

A Dissertation

by

NICOLAS RANGEL, JR.

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2007

Major Subject: Communication

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August 2007

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ABSTRACT

Part of Something Larger Than Ourselves:

George H.W. Bush and the Rhetoric of the First

U.S. War in the Persian Gulf. (August 2007)

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During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, George H.W. Bush achieved the rhetorical success that had escaped his prior speaking endeavors. If the aforementioned assessments regarded Bush's Gulf War rhetoric as a rhetorical triumph, in light of prior damning criticism of his rhetorical abilities, then an explanation for that triumph is in order. Bush's rhetoric differed from his Presidential predecessors by virtue of two factors. First, as the first U.S. president of the Post-Cold War era, Bush's rhetoric faced different rhetorical constraints than those faced by his predecessors, as he no longer had the narrative framework of the Cold War to explain U.S. foreign policy action. Second, Bush rhetorically juxtaposed American exceptionalism and realism within his rhetoric itself. This differed from the rhetoric of his immediate predecessor, Ronald Reagan, whose rhetoric employed American exceptionalism without reference to realism, although that rhetoric was strategically geared toward achieving realist foreign policy ends. Bush's success was also considerable in that he faced significant rhetorical constraints created or exacerbated by Reagan. Reagan's reputation as the "Great

Communicator,” contrasted with Bush’s less-than-stellar reputation as an orator, makes Bush’s rhetorical success particularly worth understanding.

President George H.W. Bush relied on three particular arguments to facilitate a U.S. military victory during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. These arguments differed considerably from foreign policy arguments offered by the Reagan administration with respect to the manner in which they addressed issues concerning the United Nations and the Vietnam War. First, Bush promoted U.N. diplomacy as a subsidiary of U.S. foreign policy. For Bush, the U.N. served as a venue where world opinion could be galvanized and action serving United States interests would not be constrained so much as legitimized. Second, he compared and contrasted U.S. action in the Gulf to the Vietnam War. In doing so, he combined the moral urgency of prior foreign policy efforts with the hindsight necessary to avoid a repeat of the American experience in Vietnam. Third, in retrospectively assessing the Gulf War, Bush depicted the conflict as a discrete foreign policy event in which he narrowly defined victory. Bush defined victory as the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, in an attempt to shape a historical consensus on the significance of U.S. action.

DEDICATION

For my family.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is the product of blood, sweat, and tears, and would not have been possible without the assistance, care and love of many people. To the members of my committee, Leroy Dorsey, Jim Burk, Marty Medhurst, and Kurt Ritter, your feedback and support have been valuable and much appreciated. A special acknowledgement to Dr. Ritter, who, whether he realizes it, or not has had a tremendous influence on the type of academic that I am and the type that I would like to become. His kindness and encouragement have meant the world to me.

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To my family of origin, thank you for your sacrifices and love, which have sustained me, and for your encouragement, which has helped to make this possible. To

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION:

PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH AND THE RHETORICAL SITUATION DURING THE FIRST GULF WAR

Saddam Hussein has given us a whole plateful of clarity, because today, in the Persian Gulf, what we are looking at is good and evil, right and wrong.

President George Herbert Walker Bush
“Remarks to Officers and Troops at Hickam Air Force Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii”
October 28, 1990

Political scientists and rhetorical critics hailed President George H.W. Bush’s success in rallying public support for military action during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. They considered it one of the most significant achievements of his administration. The immediate political implications of the conflict were substantial enough that by war’s end, Bush enjoyed public approval ratings exceeding the peak ratings of any U.S. president before him.¹

Scholars have cited the president’s rhetoric as a critical element in maintaining that support. Political scientists Ryan J. Barilleaux and Mark J. Rozell, for example, argued that the president so astutely framed his arguments for war in the Gulf that the public understood and embraced his characterization of events and the stakes involved in U.S. action.² Mary D. Anatoli, a professor of political science, compared Bush’s rhetoric to that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, alleging that his successful reading of the public projected an image of strong leadership without raising unnecessary alarm.³ Rhetorical

This dissertation follows the style of *Rhetoric and Public Affairs*.

scholar Kathleen M. German stated that Bush's rhetoric provided a successful justification for the conflict "by reviving memories of the past," while simultaneously quelling critics.⁴

These assessments stand in marked contrast to the frequent negative appraisal of the president's rhetorical ability in other situations. Kathleen Hall Jamieson, rhetorical scholar and dean of the Annenberg School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania, noted that Bush was ineffective in his efforts to influence the electorate and incapable of engaging in extended public argument about policy.⁵ Lilyan Wilder, a professional speech consultant who worked with Bush in 1980 described him as "verbally excessive, lacking proper emphasis and, generally, projecting an if-you-want-it-come-and-get-it attitude." Even after she worked with him and noted improvement, Wilder still described him as a "struggling orator."⁶ Craig R. Smith, a rhetorical scholar and another former speech writer to Bush, argued that by the end of his 1992 re-election bid, political observers regarded Bush as a rhetorical failure.⁷ This description significantly contrasted with Smith's characterization of Bush during the Gulf War, where he noted that the president's speechwriters made him sound "Lincolnesque."⁸

Bush, the commander-in-chief of the United States during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, achieved the rhetorical success that had escaped his prior speaking endeavors. If the aforementioned assessments regarded Bush's Gulf War rhetoric as a rhetorical triumph, in light of prior damning criticism of his rhetorical abilities, then an explanation for that triumph is in order. Bush's rhetoric differed from his Presidential predecessors by virtue of two factors. First, as the first U.S. president of the Post-Cold War era, Bush's rhetoric faced different rhetorical constraints than those

faced by his predecessors, as he no longer had the narrative framework of the Cold War to explain U.S. foreign policy action. Second, Bush rhetorically juxtaposed American exceptionalism and realism within his rhetoric itself. This differed from the rhetoric of his immediate predecessor, Ronald Reagan, whose rhetoric employed American exceptionalism without reference to realism, although that rhetoric was strategically geared toward achieving realist foreign policy ends. Bush's success was also considerable in that he faced significant rhetorical constraints created or exacerbated by Reagan. Reagan's reputation as the "Great Communicator," contrasted with Bush's less-than-stellar reputation as an orator, makes Bush's rhetorical success particularly worth understanding.

In this dissertation, I argue that President George H.W. Bush relied on three particular arguments to facilitate a U.S. military victory during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. These arguments differed considerably from foreign policy arguments offered by the Reagan administration with respect to the manner in which they addressed issues concerning the United Nations and the Vietnam War. First, Bush promoted U.N. diplomacy as a subsidiary of U.S. foreign policy. For Bush, the U.N. served as a venue where world opinion could be galvanized and action serving United States interests would not be constrained so much as legitimized. Second, he compared and contrasted U.S. action in the Gulf to the Vietnam War. In doing so, he combined the moral urgency of prior foreign policy efforts with the hindsight necessary to avoid a repeat of the American experience in Vietnam. Third, in retrospectively assessing the Gulf War, Bush depicted the conflict as a discrete foreign policy event in which he narrowly defined victory. Bush defined victory as the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, in an attempt

to shape a historical consensus on the significance of U.S. action. In the section that follows, I will describe how and why Bush's rhetoric differed from Reagan's.

Bush's Rhetorical Predecessor

By several accounts, Reagan was one of the most gifted rhetors to occupy the Oval Office. Rhetorical scholars Kurt W. Ritter and David Henry called Reagan "an extraordinary platform speaker," a skill he effectively adapted to televised political speeches.⁹ Former Reagan speechwriter Tony Dolan indicated that Reagan was "an excellent speechwriter because he was a very excellent thinker."¹⁰ American studies scholar Paul D. Erickson said Reagan spoke to Americans "as a people more powerfully and persuasively than any president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt."¹¹

Reagan's rhetorical ability, in comparison to the negative appraisals of Bush's own ability, was not lost on Bush. Bush explicitly reminded his speechwriters that he was not Reagan.¹² Bush's perceived distinction between pragmatic action and rhetoric resulted in his desire to avoid what Barilleaux and Rozell referred to as "Reagan-style ideological crusades."¹³ As speechwriter Dan McGroarty noted in a telephone interview, Bush's principal rhetorical concern reflected a cautious approach that caused others to note "he was not rhetorically inclined," while actually demonstrating "a certain care in one's words to say, 'I am inclined to be careful about how I do that.'"¹⁴ Bush did not disdain Reagan's foreign policy legacy, although he did acknowledge to others that Reagan's rhetorical style was not one that he was capable of emulating.¹⁵

Reagan, however, cast such a prominent shadow over Bush's presidency that some political scientists and rhetorical scholars noted that Bush was constrained by his duty to follow Reagan's legacy.¹⁶ Rhetorical scholar and political scientist Mary Stuckey

claimed that Bush embraced “a rhetoric that includes stylistic tones reminiscent of Ronald Reagan” while differing in his “stress on substantive issues.”¹⁷ In a memorandum dated January 13, 1991 from speechwriter Jennifer Grossman to speechwriter Mark Lange entitled “SOU Quotes,” Grossman prominently featured several Reagan quotes for potential inclusion in the State of the Union address.¹⁸ Although none of the featured quotes from Reagan appeared in the final State of the Union address, the speech did prominently touch on similar themes to those found in the memorandum.

In spite of Bush’s admiration for his predecessor, Reagan’s foreign policy rhetoric was also noteworthy for the manner in which it contrasted with Bush’s rhetoric in the Gulf War. Reagan, for example, often vocally opposed the United Nations and publicly questioned its utility, both directly and through the Ambassadorship of Jeanne Kirkpatrick.¹⁹ Bush’s Gulf War rhetoric, on the other hand, explicitly relied upon arguments that positively characterized international multilateralism, particularly through the United Nations.

Bush and Reagan also had differing approaches to the memory of the Vietnam War, which continued to serve as a constraint on foreign policy rhetoric. Rhetorical scholars Davis W. Houck and Amos Kiewe attributed Reagan’s success against Jimmy Carter in 1980 to Reagan’s rhetorical use of optimism. Reagan’s rhetorical optimism subsequently restored American pride in a manner not seen since before Vietnam.²⁰ This newfound rhetorical optimism, however, was challenged when terrorists attacked the Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon. For the public, that attack recalled the inherent risk in American military deployment.

Reagan's address to the nation on October 27, 1983, dealing with that bombing and the successful U.S. invasion of Grenada, may have restored such optimism. As rhetorical scholar Kurt W. Ritter argued, "The impact of that incident on public opinion could be moderated by linking it with the Grenada invasion, which had been a success."²¹ American fears that U.S. involvement in Central America could become another Vietnam tempered that optimism, leading to the anti-communist strategy of indirect military action by proxy in the Reagan Doctrine.²² Bush was, in many ways, better able to address effectively what he described as the Vietnam syndrome by directly confronting it. He did so by explicitly contrasting direct U.S. military action in the Gulf with the Vietnam War

The public's reaction to the Vietnam War, or more accurately, the negative perception of that reaction among political elites, provided one explanation for this rhetorical shift. Researchers have long held that there existed a relationship between war casualties and war support, and much of this research focused on U.S. participation in Vietnam. Political scientist John E. Mueller conducted some of the initial work in this area in his seminal *Presidents, War, and Public Opinion*, which studied the Vietnam and Korean Wars. Mueller found Americans initially sensitive to small losses at the war's beginning, while public support became more prone to decline only after military forces incurred major casualties.²³

Research published after the Bush presidency indicated that the public was particularly loath to support certain forms of action. The public particularly opposed policies "meant to pursue a new gain or defend a new outcome."²⁴ Other researchers also demonstrated a more direct correlation between casualty rates and success in Senate campaigns, where voters have a demonstrated tendency to hold incumbents directly

responsible for the conduct of the war.²⁵ Additionally, academic work has seemed to support the contention that because of the rallying effect of wars, “extremely short conflicts that never outlive the rally effect see no decline in popular support.”²⁶ Political elites may have interpreted the influence of foreign policy action on their popularity as a function of casualty aversion, although one study by Major Charles K. Hyde of the U.S. Air Force seemed to indicate that the public might be less risk averse than other leaders.²⁷

Bush’s prioritization of mission “doability” over “strategic importance” in his foreign policy rhetoric also marked a shift away from the strength of emphasis American orators placed on their country’s exceptional nature. American exceptionalism described the belief in the unique and innate greatness of the United States, qualities which have shaped a special destiny for that nation. That belief had deep social and cultural roots in American history. The Puritans, for example, saw America as the embodiment of God’s chosen land and people, while some of the Founding Fathers saw in America’s rebellious colonies an analogous embodiment of Enlightenment ideology.²⁸ Ritter argued that the rhetoric of American revolutionary era writers and orators served to unite Americans and provide them with a special, or exceptional, identity and supported the myth of a divinely guided America.²⁹

This rhetorical conception of the United States, as a community separate from and committed to civilizing a corrupt world, became a central component of American foreign policy discourse. Rhetorical scholar Philip Wander, for example, noted that the United States played a critical role in American foreign policy rhetoric as:

the manifestation of Truth, Justice, and Freedom placed on this earth by a God whose purpose it is to make of it an instrument for extending His spiritual and

material blessings . . . an Actor with a sense of purpose, an important mission in a world of nations, and a moral and spiritual center raising it above all other nations forms the essential story out of which reasons are given in support of foreign policy.³⁰

A rhetorical focus on politically feasible policy rather than morally imperative action seemed incompatible with the image that Wander and others alleged to be the central component of American foreign policy rhetoric. When rhetors focused on that which was possible, there was a tacit acknowledgment that there were actions for the state that were impossible. This hardly seems consistent with the characterization of the divine mission that scholars have described in the rhetoric of American exceptionalism. Bush never discarded that rhetoric, but his public arguments juxtaposed it with discourse that was more prudential.

Bush's prudential foreign policy inclinations have often been associated with realism, the influential school of thought in international relations that held that the state was the preeminent actor in foreign relations and that the state was best served by maximizing its own power and preventing other states from challenging its interest.³¹ In spite of the president's general inclination toward realism, the success of his Gulf War rhetoric defied two central components of realist dogma. The first component challenged concerned realist opposition to multilateralism, particularly in organizations like the United Nations. Foreign policy realists cited Wilson's dream of collective security under the aegis of the League of Nations, and the subsequent failure of that dream, as one of the perils of idealism in the conduct of foreign affairs. Prominent realist scholar Hans Morgenthau extended that criticism to the United Nations as the League's successor, describing the U.N. and its followers as utopians who failed to comprehend the true art of diplomacy.³² The president's ability to promote the United Nations as one of the central

vehicles for the achievement of U.S. strategic interests defied explicit realist opposition to organizations like the United Nations. Bush escaped criticism as a utopian by rhetorically advocating multilateralism as a vehicle in service of the realist balance of power.

Bush also succeeded in overcoming a second component of realist dogma, a strong strategic opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam. Specifically, his explicit and implicit arguments that tied the U.S. action in the Gulf to a broader international effort against tyranny mirrored U.S. justification of the Vietnam War as a part of the broader struggle against communism. Many realists strongly opposed U.S. intervention in Vietnam, particularly abhorring arguments connecting the war to the broader American struggle in opposition to communism. Morgenthau, for instance, saw Vietnam as one of the principal sins of imprudent foreign policy. He argued that because of the unique nationalist character of Vietnamese communism, containing it did not serve a vital U.S. interest. U.S. policy, he believed, was more legitimately concerned with containing Soviet (and potentially Chinese) hegemonic expansion. Committing troops to the global containment of all communist revolutionary movements confused moral judgment with political action and for this reason was doomed to fail.³³ Bush overcame this argument by identifying the Persian Gulf War as a new kind of conflict. In doing so, he coupled past principles with the lessons learned by the U.S. in Vietnam.

For those emphasizing the new realities in post-Desert Storm Iraq, Bush's success in the Gulf was a short-lived affair. For example, some observers criticized U.S. policy in the region as a failure for several reasons. These reasons included an insurrection against Hussein's rule in Iraq that was violently quashed and a refugee crisis among

Iraq's Kurdish ethnic minority that drew in U.S. forces for protection in Operation Provide Comfort.³⁴ Other critics focused on the continued U.S. forward deployed presence and a continued threat to regional stability posed by Hussein.³⁵ Nevertheless, Bush narrowly articulated the terms of conflict as the simple opposition of aggression, and argued that the liberation of Kuwait defined victory. By doing so, Bush could defend U.S. policy in the Gulf as an unrivaled success. In his 1992 address at the Republican National Convention in Houston, for example, he depicted the Gulf War as a clear victory for the United States:

Now, the Soviet bear may be gone, but there are still wolves in the woods. And we saw that when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The Mideast might have become a nuclear powder keg, our emergency supplies held hostage. So we did what was right and what was necessary: We destroyed a threat, freed a people, and locked a tyrant in the prison of his own country.³⁶

Rather than reflecting on the continued struggle of the United States to promote regional stability in the Gulf, Bush depicted the war as a discrete foreign policy affair. In this manner, Bush's war did not threaten to become an engulfing moral crusade. Instead, the war successfully obtained the realist end of diminishing Hussein's threat to the Persian Gulf region.

As this study will show, Bush employed public arguments that successfully justified U.S. military action in the Gulf, characterizing that action's aftermath as a military victory. Although Bush believed that realist policy making was distinct from rhetoric, his Gulf War oratory transcended this distinction by embracing a discourse that merged realist means and ends with prior themes of American exceptionalism. He did this while also overcoming lingering reservations about U.N. multilateralism and post-

Vietnam military engagement. Before I demonstrate how Bush accomplished this, I will offer a more complete explanation of the rhetor and the rhetorical situation that he faced.

The Rhetor: President George Herbert Walker Bush

President George Herbert Walker Bush was born in 1924, the son of Prescott Bush and Dorothy Walker Bush, both of whom would have a significant influence on his later political life. From Dorothy, he learned an abiding sense of humility, as she constantly cautioned him against the perils of self-importance.³⁷ From his father Prescott, who eventually served as U.S. Senator representing Connecticut, Bush learned the significance of service, as his father often spoke of “‘giving something back’ to the society that had treated him so well.”³⁸

George Bush first acted upon that sense of service by enlisting in the U.S. Navy after graduating from the prestigious Phillips Academy in Andover, CT. He became the youngest fighter pilot in the Second World War and distinguished himself in combat. Bush’s military service was a significant constituent of his political ethos in later life. As he would later reflect of his experience, “Those memories were constantly in my mind when we were discussing committing troops and estimating expected combat losses . . . having been in combat rounded out my awareness of the human cost of war.”³⁹

After the war, Bush attended Yale and started a family, marrying Barbara Pierce and having a son, future president George Walker Bush.⁴⁰ He eventually entered the oil business, a venture which ultimately led him to Houston, TX, where he first entered politics in that city as the chair of the Harris County (TX) Republican Party in 1962, beginning a career that included a great variety of elected and assigned political posts. Although he lost a bid for U.S. Senate in 1964, Bush won two consecutive terms in the

U.S. House of Representatives in 1966 and 1968. In 1970 after a second failed Senate campaign, President Richard Nixon appointed Bush to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Bush followed that with a brief stint as chair of the Republican National Committee. Bush, who had proven himself an adept diplomat, was appointed by Nixon's successor, Gerald Ford, to serve as head of the American Liaison Office in the People's Republic of China.⁴¹ Although Bush entered his diplomatic career with little experience in foreign policy, his diplomatic experience with the United Nations and China marked him as a foreign policy insider. This would lead Bush to take a more hands-on approach to issues of foreign policy than in any other area of his future presidency.

Ford subsequently nominated Bush to succeed William Colby as the Director of Central Intelligence. Departing after Carter's inauguration,⁴² Bush eventually resumed his political life in a bid for the 1980 Republican nomination for the Presidency, which ultimately earned him the slot as Ronald Reagan's Vice-Presidential running mate. Bush's political and diplomatic experience served him well as Vice President. When he successfully campaigned for the Presidency in 1988, he relied heavily on the foreign policy successes of the Reagan administration, in addition to his extensive political résumé. As such, political observers portrayed his pending presidency as an extension of Reagan's. This fact troubled Bush, who believed that his own style of leadership depended less on that quality most firmly associated with Reagan, the Great Communicator: a predisposition toward rhetoric.⁴³ As speechwriter Mary Kate Cary observed, "Bush knew that he wasn't that good with public speeches, that he wasn't Reagan."⁴⁴

Bush's rhetorical ability was more of a detriment than an asset in his bid for the Oval Office. The President would have been unlikely to challenge such an assessment, as he himself placed little value in rhetoric as a component of leadership.⁴⁵ However, a world slowly emerging from the bilateral hostilities of the Cold War era tested his willingness and ability to exercise rhetorical leadership.

The Rhetorical Context: The Post Cold-War Era

On June 12, 1987, when President Reagan exclaimed, "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down that wall,"⁴⁶ few imagined that the reunification of Germany and the end of the Cold War would soon become a reality. The collapse of the Soviet Union that culminated in 1991 shifted the international geopolitical map and the framework of U.S. foreign policy. From the end of World War II to the late 1980s, the global confrontation between the planet's two dominant hegemonic forces provided the prevailing rhetorical context for all foreign policy initiatives and actions. Rhetorical critic Thomas Kane argued that the Cold War functioned as a frame of reference by which observers might comprehend the events that occurred within that era's "lifespan."⁴⁷

American Cold War rhetoric challenged communist expansion and ideologies throughout the world, depicting the struggle against these forces as a moral crusade. In some ways, foreign policy realists distinguished this from the actual conduct of the Cold War itself, which was more concerned with the practical implications of rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The conduct of foreign policy was, itself, more a practical matter conducted by rational policymakers to combat the destabilizing influence of Soviet imperial aspirations and revolutionary violence than the moral crusade that policymakers often depicted in U.S. rhetoric. Jerel Rosati, a former research associate at

the foreign affairs division of the Congressional Research Service, noted that the moralizing tendency in U.S. foreign policy justifications frequently contained moral hyperbole regarding policy goals while actually engaging in policy that involved the pursuit of national interest distinct from those aforementioned goals.⁴⁸

Rhetorical scholars have largely acknowledged Reagan as one of the central rhetorical figures of the Cold War. Rhetorical scholar Robert Ivie noted in 1984 that Reagan was concerned with making a strong but reasonable case against Soviet communism in order to build support for his foreign policy choices.⁴⁹ Ivie and fellow rhetorician Kurt Ritter claimed that Reagan's characterization of the Soviet Union as the "evil empire" became the catchphrase for "the first President to succeed in engaging the Soviets in a genuine program of nuclear arms reduction."⁵⁰ While Reagan often appeared to rely on arguments that depicted the Cold War struggle in moral terms, political scientist Charles A. Hantz noted that Reagan remained constrained by the realist framework of American foreign policy, such that Reagan's rhetoric always served a strategic rather than an intentionally and morally provocative end.⁵¹

As the Cold War ended, foreign policymakers could no longer simply rely on the U.S.-Soviet conflict to frame their public arguments.⁵² Political scientist and rhetorical critic Mary Stuckey noted the difficulties that these changes posed for policymakers, as those policymakers no longer possessed a mutual vocabulary for describing the conduct of foreign policy.⁵³ Historical circumstances compelled Bush to face a new world devoid of bilateral U.S.-Soviet hostility and the familiar language that accompanied it. He confronted the new historical foreign policy context on August 2, 1990, in remarks delivered to a symposium of international leaders at the Aspen Institute. These

comments addressed new threats “wholly unrelated to the previous patterns of the U.S. Soviet relationship.”⁵⁴ As he argued:

And what we require now is a defense policy that adapts to the significant changes we are witnessing without neglecting the enduring realities that will continue to shape our security strategy, a policy of peacetime engagement every bit as constant and committed to the defense of our interests and ideals in today's world as in the time of conflict and cold war.

Among those new realities was the emerging situation in the Persian Gulf.

The Rhetorical Context: The Persian Gulf

The United States has long considered the Persian Gulf region of the Middle East to be an area of strategic interest, as national security has become indistinguishable from energy security. To that end, the U.S. has maintained varied relationships with the region's leaders. For several years, one of the most important of these regional relationships was with the Shah of Iran,⁵⁵ a relationship curtailed in the late 1970s with the rise of fundamentalist forces lead by the Ayatollah Khomeini, a Shiite cleric who successfully ousted the Shah from power. The rise of the Islamic Republic of Iran posed considerable difficulty for U.S. policymakers, as the regime was explicitly hostile to the United States—a hostility which lead to the taking of American hostages by radical forces in that nation.⁵⁶ The taking of the hostages, a source of distress for many Americans and a fact that magnified existing anxiety over energy security,⁵⁷ likely played a significant role in the defeat of incumbent President Carter by Ronald Reagan in 1980.⁵⁸

U.S. security policy in the Gulf was concerned with the potential destabilization of the region by the Iranian revolution.⁵⁹ This led the U.S. to pursue a strategic relationship with the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein in neighboring Iraq.⁶⁰ Iraq and

Iran had a long history of mutual animosity, which the U.S. could exploit to its advantage. The United States government began to lose faith in Hussein by the late 1980s after a bloody regional conflict between Iran and Iraq. Even with that lack of confidence, few in the administration envisioned that on August 1, 1990, on the same day as President Bush's address in Aspen,⁶¹ Iraqi forces would forcibly invade and occupy neighboring Kuwait. Iraqi aggression served as a reminder of the need for vigilance in the Post-Cold War era, a fact that Bush noted in his Aspen address:

The brutal aggression launched last night against Kuwait illustrates my central thesis: Notwithstanding the alteration in the Soviet threat, the world remains a dangerous place with serious threats to important U.S. interests wholly unrelated to the earlier patterns of the U.S.-Soviet relationship. These threats, as we've seen just in the last 24 hours, can arise suddenly, unpredictably, and from unexpected quarters. U.S. interests can be protected only with capability which is in existence and which is ready to act without delay.⁶²

As with Iran, Iraq and Kuwait had a long history of mutual animosity. Kuwait, a small but prosperous emirate in the Gulf, was one of the region's largest producers of petroleum, and a combination of historic animosity, intense poverty, and sheer expansionist intent guided Saddam Hussein to direct that invasion.⁶³

Although Iraq's military action surprised the President's closest advisors, Hussein might have believed that his invasion had the tacit support of the Bush administration. When the Iraqis asked U.S. diplomat April Glaspie how the United States would react to a hypothetical invasion, the regime was told that the United States did not have an "opinion on inter-Arab disputes like your border dispute with Kuwait."⁶⁴ While critics argued that Glaspie was acting as a surrogate for the administration in suggesting U.S. neutrality, many failed to note that she had also indicated that the U.S. "could never excuse settlement of disputes by any but peaceful means."⁶⁵

Just as the realities of the Cold War's end forcibly confronted Bush, so did Hussein, in an altogether different manner. While the U.S. position valued stability and the absence of conflict, Hussein's rhetoric took a Pan-Arab, anti-Western tone. Concerned that the Cold War's end would leave Iraq neglected by its former benefactors in the United States, Hussein sought greater regional influence, and made no secret of Iraq's territorial aspirations in Kuwait.⁶⁶

Bush announced troop deployments to Saudi Arabia, presumably to prevent an invasion of that and the other Gulf states, on August 9, 1990 under the title Operation Desert Shield. According to James P. Pffifner, a professor of public policy at George Mason University, Bush initiated a major rhetorical offensive against Saddam Hussein in an address on August 12, without prior consultation from his foreign policy advisers.⁶⁷ The speech was volatile, laden with *ad hominem* attacks against Hussein. Bush would take a more diplomatic tone in attaining international support for United Nations Resolution 661, which called for an international embargo against Iraq, and Resolution 665, which authorized a blockade to enforce the embargo. Over the coming months, U.S. military strength in Saudi Arabia grew considerably, providing the U.S. with the necessary force levels to remove Iraq compulsorily from Kuwait.

On November 29, 1990, the U.S. successfully sponsored U.N. Resolution 678, which provided Iraq with a deadline of January 15, 1991, for a complete withdrawal of forces from Kuwait, authorizing the members of the United Nations to use "all necessary means" to "restore international peace and security in the area."⁶⁸ On the evening of January 16, 1991, President Bush delivered an address to the nation that announced the initiation of Operation Desert Storm, an international military effort led by the U.S., to

remove Iraq forcibly from Kuwait. By February 27, 1991, military domination by the U.S.-led coalition forced Iraqi troops to retreat from Kuwait. Bush proceeded to announce a cease-fire, ending a war that many in the United States and the world perceived as a significant victory for Bush and his administration.⁶⁹

Affirmative reactions to U.S. policy rhetoric from domestic audiences were a characteristic of George H. W. Bush's Iraq policy. In spite of some early partisan legislative opposition to increased U.S. engagement in the region,⁷⁰ Bush received persistent domestic support for U.S. efforts in the region before and during the first war in the Gulf.⁷¹

The stated and explicit objective of the coalition forces during the initial Desert Shield phase of the first Gulf War was the defense of Saudi territory from a potential Iraqi incursion after Iraq's successful occupation of Kuwait. When Desert Shield gave way to Desert Storm, the U.S. policy ultimately shifted to the forced withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory. The Bush administration wished to maintain the international coalition that facilitated U.S. efforts to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. This partially explained why military action during Operation Desert Storm was never explicitly concerned with directly eliminating the sovereign authority of Hussein regime. Any efforts that might have exceeded the perceived international mandate for action in the Gulf would have disrupted that alliance, a fact not lost on the administration.⁷²

That should not suggest that the administration was incapable of accomplishing its own unilateral goals in that conflict, but that those goals were necessarily limited in order to maintain the support of participants in the multilateral alliance. Neither should this suggest that any rhetorical defense of Persian Gulf policy would require little effort,

in spite of the relative ease of the mission. Military commentator Anthony Cordesman explained that the successive Iraq policy failures of Bush's successors, William J. Clinton and George W. Bush, resulted from their inability to engage in a successful public defense of United States policy toward Iraq. That inability culminated in the current administration's miscalculation regarding support for potential military action against Iraq among members of the United Nations and its own traditional allies in Europe and the near and Middle East.⁷³

George H.W. Bush's rhetorical success regarding the Persian Gulf conflict stood in marked contrast to the popular conception of his own rhetorical prowess. Andrew Furgeson, a Bush speechwriter, said that Bush "thought of speeches as superficial P.R. events."⁷⁴ In spite of this rhetorical reluctance, Furgeson described Bush as well aware of the impact of a presidential statement. Knowing this, Bush and his staff carefully constructed what Bush said in light of that knowledge, which Furgeson claims was especially true regarding his rhetoric on the Gulf War.⁷⁵ The negative perception of Bush's rhetorical ability versus the relative success of his rhetorical performance during the Gulf War is the subject of this dissertation.

Managing domestic support for foreign policy action has been rhetorically challenging. Focusing on messages and the context in which policy discourse creates those messages has helped to provide insight into how audiences perceived various policies as legitimate. According to Richard A. Melanson, the process of policy legitimation inextricably tied that legitimacy to rhetoric, as presidential administrations attempt to justify foreign policy as both desirable, such that the policy expresses objectives valuable to the audience, and feasible, such that the policy will achieve those

objectives.⁷⁶ Various rhetorical examinations of the foreign policy speeches of George H.W. Bush during the first U.S.-Iraq Gulf War provided some insight into how the president successfully employed rhetoric to such ends.⁷⁷

Rhetorical critics generally regarded Bush's effort in the first Gulf War a rhetorical, if not an ethical success. Robert L. Ivie, for example, argued that President Bush's use of rhetoric during the first Gulf War represented a historical addiction to the rhetoric of tragic fear that had dominated the Cold War.⁷⁸ By demonizing Hussein and elevating the United States mission in the region, Bush continued "the cycle of national redemption through the bloody ritual of tragic victimage" that had been learned in the U.S. struggle against communism.⁷⁹ Carol K. Winkler contended that Bush's framing of Iraq as a terrorist opponent rather than a conventional military foe coincided with abrupt shifts in public opinion that favored the administration's efforts in the region.⁸⁰

Thomas Kane and Mary Stuckey also saw traces of Cold War rhetoric in Bush's effort,⁸¹ which should come as little surprise given Bush's association with that conflict through his years of government service. Kane argued that many of the central ideological premises that guided the Cold War had not been so much abandoned as modified, as economic dualism has replaced "prophetic dualism." "Prophetic dualism," according to Wander, involved the rhetorical unification of nationalism and spirituality in that the U.S. became the embodiment of good while its foreign policy contraries represented biblical evil, which Kane believed would be juxtaposed upon economic haves and have-nots.⁸² Kane argued that the language of foreign policy would ultimately shape the order that emerged from the end of the Cold War, and thus far, that language showed little substantive difference from prior forms. Stuckey maintained that the foreign policy

contingencies of the post-Cold War era require the adaptation of old forms to new situations. George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, she argued, embraced a hybridized style of foreign policy rhetoric, which cast the world in similar terms, but were better adapted to the altered historical circumstances, such that the world remained gripped in similar Manichean struggles, but the antagonists differed from their Cold War forbears in name and circumstance.⁸³

Stuckey and Kathleen M. German noted the substantial parallels between Bush's rhetoric in the Gulf and the rhetoric of World War II.⁸⁴ Stuckey found broad parallels between Bush's rhetoric and that rhetoric used to justify participation in World War II. Bush specifically relied on the analogy that failing to stop Hussein was akin to the failure of allied forces to stop Hitler in Munich. German declared that Bush's use of directive language overcame American public memory about Vietnam. She argued that directive language also imbued policy toward Iraq with the divine sense of mission that frequently characterizes American exceptionalist foreign policy rhetoric. Rachel Martin Harlow found that Bush derived a sense of rhetorical authority by framing the agents in the conflict through dialectically opposed terms, allowing Bush "to polarize the conflict and identify who belonged on which side."⁸⁵

Roy Joseph focused on Bush's use of the phrase "New World Order," which he employed to persuade "the international community that his political style was based on consultative leadership and not on hegemony."⁸⁶ However, Joseph noted that Bush's failure to articulate his vision of the New World Order more explicitly permitted a series of varied "misconceptions" that undermined a more explicit "fulfillment of the United Nations Charter."⁸⁷ Aside from Joseph's work, scholars have paid little attention to the

nature of the United Nations and the sense of rhetorical authority that Bush's arguments derived for action among national and international audiences.⁸⁸ Viewing the success of George H.W. Bush's rhetoric during the first Gulf War, particularly in light of the failures of subsequent administrations to defend U.S. military policy toward Iraq, raises some important questions.

How did the administration tailor its rhetoric to address the public's concerns about the United Nations and the risks of military action in the Gulf? Why does the public often recall the Gulf War as a victory for the Bush administration? Does the instability that characterized Iraq after the war seem to contradict much of the administration's alleged humanitarian ends?

While there has been considerable research on the first Gulf War, only a fragment of that literature has addressed it from a rhetorical perspective. In referencing rhetoric on the Gulf War, I am speaking specifically of public rhetoric directed toward the American body politic. This dissertation focuses on the rhetoric of the first United States war effort in the Persian Gulf. I will argue President Bush juxtaposed the seemingly incompatible rhetorical themes of Realism and American exceptionalism. In doing so, he effectively created a "legitimate" Coalition that enjoyed domestic and international support.

Analysis of the rhetorical situations and the rhetoric of the respective Bush administrations involves use of several primary sources including Public Papers of the President (for both Presidents Bush), the texts written by each President, and archival material from the George Bush Presidential Library in College Station, Texas. This primary research also includes material gathered from interviews with four figures who served prominent roles in crafting the President's Gulf War rhetoric: the Director of

Communications, David Demarest; senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the staff of the National Security Richard Haass; and speechwriters Mark W. Davis and Dan McGroarty.⁸⁹

Chapter II focuses further on the traditions of American exceptionalism in American foreign policy rhetoric, and explains how those themes have manifested themselves in American political discourse. This chapter then addresses the realist opposition to exceptionalism and its rhetorical manifestation, before offering a brief comparative perspective on the rhetorical approaches of George H.W. Bush, George W. Bush, and Ronald Reagan. Chapter III discusses how Bush rhetorically justified multilateral action through the United Nations, arguably the antithesis of realist policy, by rendering the organization as less an independent agent than a venue for Western leadership of the post-Cold War scene. While some have argued that the U.S. used U.N. authorization to gain legitimacy for its actions, for American audiences it was quite the reverse, as U.S. rhetorical authority legitimized the United Nations, overcoming earlier objections to that organization as raised during the Reagan administration. Chapter IV addresses Bush's effort to build support for the U.S. mission in the Gulf by contrasting that mission with U.S. efforts in Vietnam. By emphasizing the ability to act quickly in the Gulf, Bush implicitly compared U.S. action in the Gulf to the war in Vietnam, distinguishing the U.S. action in the Gulf as an isolated, and discrete event unlikely to be repeated in the post-Cold War era, which he defined as a likely era of peace. In doing so, he also successfully defended direct military action to address effectively the memory of Vietnam that had lingered in his predecessor's administration. In Chapter V, I will argue that Bush, in speeches and memoirs, retroactively recast the Gulf War as a foreign policy

triumph, in spite of the ensuing regional instability, by characterizing it as an event distinct from the instability that followed. This recasting was particularly significant because Bush and his supporters portrayed the war as a realist success, without regard to how this characterization may have run contrary to earlier arguments supporting military action to end Hussein's continued reign. The concluding chapter will focus on the present administration of George W. Bush, arguing that the use of the rhetorical strategies employed during the first Gulf War could address some of the problems that the current administration has faced.

Notes

1. "Public Opinion and the Gulf Crisis: The Review Complete," *The Public Perspective*, March 1991/April 1991, 15. Gallup maintained approval ratings for every president since Franklin D. Roosevelt, with Truman having enjoyed the second highest peak approval rating at 87% to Bush's 89%. Bush's highest measured score, however, could be found in a Gordon Black/USA Today survey at 91%. Only Ronald Reagan and Bush had data available from non-Gallup surveys.
2. Ryan J. Barilleaux and Mark J. Rozell, *Power and Prudence: The Presidency of George H.W. Bush* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 70.
3. Quoted by Dan Balz and Anna Devroy in "For Bush, Persian Gulf War Was Transforming Moment; Long Experience Shaped Leadership Policies," *Washington Post* March 3, 1991, A1.
4. Kathleen M. German, "Invoking the Glorious War: Framing the Persian Gulf Conflict Through Directive Language," *Southern Communication Journal* 60(1995): 300.
5. Quoted by Marshall Ingerson in "Bush Drug Speech to Test a More Trumanesque Style," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 29, 1989, 1.
6. Quoted by Don Oldenburg in "Career File: Speaking of Professionals," *Washington Post*, May 28, 1986, B5.
7. Craig R. Smith, "George Herbert Walker Bush," in *U.S. Presidents as Orators: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, ed. Halford Ryan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 349.

8. Smith, "George Herbert Walker Bush," in *U.S. Presidents as Orators*, 349. See also Catherine L. Langford, "George Bush's Struggle with the Vision Thing," in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 28. Rhetorical critic Langford has argued that, ironically, Bush's Gulf War leadership and rhetorical vision were so strong that they only served to draw attention to the President's inadequacies with regard to his domestic agenda and may have precipitated his political downfall.
9. Kurt W. Ritter and David Henry, *Ronald Reagan: The Great Communicator* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 116.
10. Quoted in Martin J. Medhurst, "Writing Speeches for Ronald Reagan: An Interview with Tony Dolan," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1 (1998): 249. Dolan was confirming a sentiment informally shared by several other former Reagan staffers.
11. Paul D. Erickson, *Reagan Speaks: The Making of an American Myth* (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 9.
12. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 65-69.
13. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 25.
14. Personal telephone interview with Daniel McGroarty on November 14, 2006.
15. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 66.
16. Bruce Miroff, "From 'Midcentury' to Fin-de-Si cle: The Exhaustion of the Presidential Image," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1 (1998), 192, and Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill*

- Clinton* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 429-442, Mary E. Stuckey, *The President as Interpreter-in-Chief* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1991), 124-126.
17. Stuckey, *The President as Interpreter-In-Chief*, 124.
 18. These quotes had been excerpted from a recent article "Voice of America: Ronald Reagan and the American Rhetorical Tradition," by Heritage Foundation research fellow Steven Heyward, *Policy Review* Summer 1985. Found in Document: "13 January 1991 Memorandum for Mark Lange, From: Jennifer Grossman, Subject: Quotes for S.O.U.," From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 81, Folder-State of the Union 1991 1/29/01 [OA 6028], George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
 19. According to journalist Phyllis Bennis, "Throughout Ronald Reagan's years in office, especially during the tenure of his formidable Ambassador Kirkpatrick, the U.N. was scorned in U.S. policy circles." Bennis, *Calling the Shots: How Washington Dominates Today's U.N.* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1996), 18. See also Robert W. Gregg, *About Face: The United States and the United Nations* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993), and Thomas M. Franck, *Nation Against Nation: What Happened to the U.N. Dream and What the U.S. Can Do About It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).
 20. Houck and Kiewe, *Actor, Ideologue, Politician: The Public Speeches of Ronald Reagan* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1993). The more explicit contrast was with the pessimism engendered by the Iranian hostage crisis, but that sentiment was rhetorically situated alongside American involvement in Vietnam.

21. "Ronald Reagan," in *U.S. Presidents as Orators: A Bio-Critical Sourcebook*, ed. Halford Ryan (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 323. The Lebanon bombing occurred on October 23, 1983, while the invasion of Grenada occurred on October 25. David C. Klope noted that Reagan's address was subsequently followed by "a significant rise in approval and a decline in disapproval." See Klope, "Defusing a Foreign Policy Crisis: Myth and Victimage in Reagan's 1983 Lebanon/Grenada Address," *Western Journal of Communication* 50(1986): 349. See also David S. Birdsell, "Ronald Reagan on Lebanon and Grenada: Flexibility and Interpretation in the Application of Kenneth Burke's Pentad," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1987): 267-279.
22. As Kenneth E. Sharpe noted of the Reagan administration, "They found themselves trapped between their opposition to communism and their opposition to U.S. troop commitments, between "No more Cubas," and "No more Vietnams." See Sharpe, "The Post-Vietnam Formula Under Siege: The Imperial Presidency and Central America," *Political Science Quarterly* 102 (1988): 569. See also Chester Pach, "The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism, and Policy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 36 (2006): 75-88.
23. John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1973).
24. Miroslav Nincic, "Loss Aversion and the Domestic Context of Military Intervention," *Political Research Quarterly* 50 (1997): 115. Nincic examined 18 different American military operations, from the Korean War beginning in 1950 to the U.S. invasion of Haiti in 1994. By examining presidential statements for

- policy justifications, he then assessed how the president's popularity was affected that military action.
25. See Scott Sigmund Gartner, et al., "War Casualties, Policy Positions and the Fate of Legislators," *Political Research Quarterly* 53 (2003): 476.
 26. Scott Sigmund Gartner and Gary M. Segura, "War, Casualties, and Public Opinion," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (1998): 281.
 27. "Casualty Aversion: Implications for Policymakers and Senior Military Officers," *Aerospace Power Journal* 14(2000): 17-27.
 28. See Kurt W. Ritter, "The Myth Making Functions of the Rhetoric of the American Revolution," *Today's Speech* 23 (1975): 25-33.
 29. Kurt W. Ritter, "The Myth-Making Functions of the Rhetoric of the American Revolution," 29-30.
 30. Philip Wander, "The Rhetoric of American Foreign Policy," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70 (1984): 353.
 31. Thomas J. Friedman, "As Ideology Recedes, The U.S. Rearranges Its Global Struggles," December 31, 1989, *New York Times*, Section 4-2.
 32. Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 358.
 33. Hans J. Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 26.
 34. See Bill Frelick, "The False Promise of Operation Provide Comfort: Protecting Refugees or Protecting State Power," *Middle East Report*, May/June 1992: 22-27, and Ronald Ofteringer and Ralf Bäcker, "A Republic of Statelessness: Three

- Years of Humanitarian Intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan,” *Middle East Report*, March-June 1994: 40-45.
35. See Ann Devroy and Molly Moore, “Winning the War and Struggling With Peace; U.S. Unprepared for Iraqi Retribution, Extent of Exodus in Conflict’s Aftermath,” *Washington Post* April 19, 1991, A1; Grant D. Hammond, “Myths of the Gulf War: Lessons Not to Learn,” *Air Power Journal* 12(1998): 6-18; David Lawday, “A Different Kind of War,” *U.S. News and World Report*, May 6, 1991, 47; Tom Mathews et al., “A Quagmire After All,” April 29, 1991, 23; and U.S. News and World Report, *Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York: Times Books, 1992).
 36. “Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican national Convention in Houston, August 20, 1992,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1992-1993, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 1381.
 37. Bush biographer Herbert S. Parmet described Dorothy Walker Bush as an almost mythical figure who still corrected her son’s behavior in public life including one instance in which “he appeared to be reading when President Reagan was giving a speech.” See *George Bush, the Life of a Lone Star Yankee* (New York: Scribner, 1997), 23.
 38. Walt Hartigan, “Born to Run: On the Privilege of Being George Bush,” *Washington Post Magazine*, September 28, 1986, 16.
 39. Quoted in an interview in Joe Hyams, *Flight of the Avenger: George Bush at War* (New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991), 158-159.

40. Bush had been accepted to Yale prior to the war, but opted to enlist. See Hyams, *Flight of the Avenger*, 31-33.
41. The United States had not yet formally recognized the People's Republic of China. In order to avoid political complications of such recognition, they retained a post in Beijing, which they labeled as "Liaison Office" rather than a consulate. See Herbert S. Parmet, *George Bush, the Life of a Lone Star Yankee*, 172.
42. Bush offered to continue as DCI until Carter selected a new Director, but was rebuffed and told that Carter would have a new Director in place by January 20, 1977.
43. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 46-48.
44. Interviewed in Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 67.
45. Martin J. Medhurst, "Why Rhetoric Matters: George H.W. Bush in the White House," in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 1-18, and George Mervin, *George Bush and the Guardianship Presidency* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1996), 225-226.
46. Reagan made his remarks within 100 feet of the Berlin Wall. For more information, see Gerald M. Boyd, "Raze Berlin Wall, Reagan Urges Soviets," *New York Times*, June 13, 1987, Section 1-3 and Russell Watson, "Waiting for Gorbachev," *Newsweek*, June 22, 1987, 18.
47. Thomas Kane, "Foreign Policy Suppositions and Commanding Ideas," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 28 (1991): 80.

48. Jerel A. Rosati, *Politics of United States Foreign Policy* (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace, 1993), 394.
49. Robert L. Ivie, "Speaking 'Common Sense' About the Soviet Threat: Reagan's Rhetorical Stance," *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 48 (1984): 40.
50. Robert L. Ivie and Kurt Ritter, "Whither the 'Evil Empire': Reagan and the Presidential Candidates Debating Foreign Policy in the 1988 Campaign," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 32 (1989): 436.
51. Charles A. Hantz, "Ideology, Pragmatism, and Ronald Reagan's World View: Full of Sound and Fury, Signifying . . .?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26(1996): 947.
52. This difficulty in finding a suitable framework has largely been supplanted by the rhetoric of the post-9/11 era, when President George W. Bush initiated the "War on Terror." Some critics argue that such a term is laden with insufficient clarity to supplant the post-Cold War malaise described by observers of international affairs. However, the frequency with which the phrase has been adopted within the United States and in the international community suggests that however it is articulated by a particular rhetor, "terrorism" has thus far become the dominant exigence in foreign policy rhetoric.
53. Mary E. Stuckey, "Competing Foreign Policy Visions: Rhetorical Hybrids After the Cold War," *Western Journal of Communication*, 59 (1995): 214.
54. George Bush, "Remarks at the Aspen Institute Symposium in Aspen, Colorado, August 2, 1990." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990* v. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1092.

55. The United States relied on relationships with Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia to balance one another. While wary of the Shah's imperial aspirations in the region, the Saudis often saw Iran as a counterbalance against Iraqi militancy, while Kuwait depended on stable relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia such that the Saudis could act as a guarantor of Kuwaiti sovereignty. Given the varying regional interest, it should come as little surprise that the United States had multiple regional alliances without explicitly favoring any particular state, although they played the strongest role in maintaining the Iranian monarchy. For more information, see Sol W. Sanders, "An Emerging Strategy for Mideast Moderation," *Business Week*, April 10, 1978, 52, and "Kuwait: Balance is All," *The Economist*, July 2, 1977, 65.
56. See William Braigin, "Iranians Seize U.S. Mission, Ask Shah's Return for Trial: Ex-Ruler's Presence Is Problem for U.S." *Washington Post* November 5, 1979, A1, and "Iran Amok, Ochlotheocracy Takes Over: Can Iran's Surviving Good Sense or Its Army Be Far Behind?" *Economist*, November 10, 1979, 15.
57. William D. Hartley, "Persian Gulf Tension Adds to U.S. Oil Woes," *U.S. News and World Report*, November 5, 1979, 29.
58. Gary R. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War: Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 155-156.
59. Early fears included the possibility that the vacuum created by the Shah's fall would leave the region more susceptible to Soviet influence. Concerns about overall military threats to U.S. energy security were such that the Carter administration broached the possibility of a sustained military presence in the

- region. See “New U.S. Goal: More Muscle in the Mideast,” *U.S. News and World Report* December 31, 1979, 6.
60. See Secretary of State George Schultz’s interview with the editors of *U.S. News and World Report* (“Challenges facing America in a Changing World,” *USN&WR*, March 12, 1984, 27-29). Schultz insists that the U.S. maintain neutrality in the Iran-Iraq War while speaking of U.S. efforts to “develop” and “improve” its relationship with Iraq, which had been, to this point, a client state of the Soviet Union. See also George Daniel Southerland, “US Moves to Counter Strength of Iran, Syria in Mideast,” *Christian Science Monitor*, February 22, 1984, 3.
61. Because of the geographic distance between Iraq and the United States, the invasion of August 2 actually occurred on August 1, Eastern Standard Time, in the United States.
62. Bush, “Remarks at the Aspen Institute Symposium in Aspen, Colorado, August 2, 1990,” 1092.
63. See Jeffrey Record, *Hollow Victory: A Contrary View of the Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 1993).
64. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War*, 160-161.
65. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War*, 161.
66. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War*, 156-157.
67. James P. Pfiffner, “Presidential Policy-Making in the Gulf War,” in *The Presidency and the Persian Gulf War*, ed. Marcia Lynn Whicker, James P. Pfiffner and Raymond A. Moore, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 5.

68. Hess, *Presidential Decisions for War*, 183.
69. “‘Kuwait is Liberated:’ Bush Relaxes Efforts to Abate Hussein,” *Washington Post*, February 28, 1991, A1, “The Gulf War: All Hostilities Cease,” *Financial Times*, February 28, 1991, I-1.
70. Michael Barone, “Where Congress Comes Down on the Gulf Crisis,” *U.S. News and World Report*, September 24, 1990, 60; Michael Kranish, “Congress Rent by Deep Divisions on Gulf Policy,” *Boston Globe*, January 2, 1991, National/Foreign-1; Michael K. Frisby, “Top Democrats Oppose Force Now,” *Boston Globe*, January 9, 1991, National/Foreign1; Adam Clymer, “Confrontation in the Gulf; Congress Acts to Authorize War in Gulf; Margins Are 5 Votes in Senate, 67 in House,” *New York Times*, January 13, 1991, Section 1-1.
71. John Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 17-24, 69-79.
72. Donald M. Snow, “The Shifting Threat and American National Security: Sources and Consequences of Change,” in *The Adaptive Military: Armed Forces in a Turbulent World*, ed. James Burk (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 123.
73. Anthony H Cordesman, *The Iraq War: Strategy, Tactics, and Military Lessons* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 514-515.
74. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 72.
75. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 74.

76. Richard A. Melanson, *American Foreign Policy Since the Vietnam War: The Search for Consensus from Nixon to Clinton* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 33.
77. This should not suggest that Bush's Gulf War policy rhetoric was universally successful. Denise Bostdorff, for example, argues that Bush rhetorically promoted the situation in the Gulf as a policy crisis, which made military action inevitable and diverted attention away from his lack of attention to domestic affairs. In a similar argument, Timothy G. Cole claims that the President's rhetorical focus on the Gulf War during the 1992 Presidential campaign undermined his ability to project a broad rhetorical image of domestic economic and social success, a failure that contributed to his loss in spite of his record level of post-war popularity. See Denise M. Bostdorff, *The Presidency and Foreign Crises* (Columbia, SC: University Of South Carolina Press, 1994), and Timothy M. Cole, "When Intentions Go Awry: The Bush Administrations Foreign Policy Rhetoric," *Political Communication* 13(1996): 93-113.
78. Robert L. Ivie, "Tragic Fear and the Rhetorical Presidency: Combating Evil in the Persian Gulf," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), 153-178.
79. Ivie, "Tragic Fear and the Rhetorical Presidency," 176.
80. Carol K. Winkler, "Narrative Reframing of Public Argument: George Bush's Handling of the Persian Gulf Conflict," in *Warranting Assent: Case Studies in Argument Evaluation*, ed. Edward Schiappa (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

81. Thomas Kane, "Foreign Policy Suppositions and Commanding Ideas," 80-90, and Stuckey, "Competing Foreign Policy Visions: Rhetorical Hybrids after the Cold War," 214-227.
82. Wander, "The Rhetoric of American Foreign Policy," 153-183.
83. Stuckey's argument relies heavily on the categories for various foreign policy rhetorical strategies devised by Thomas A. Holihan in his 1986 article on the Panama Canal Treaties. Holihan argues that arguments over those treaties depicted one of three possible orientational narratives. The first was The Cold War, identified as the Manichean struggle between the West and Communism. The second was The New World Order, which characterized the policy as a product of the post World War II international democratic order. The final one, Power Politics, explicitly argued that the treaties were essential to maintain American regional hegemony. Stuckey's hybrids are varied combinations of these three forms. See Holihan, "The Public Controversy Over the Panama Canal Treaties: An Analysis of American Foreign Policy Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 50 (1986): 368-387.
84. German, "Invoking the Glorious War," 292-302; Mary E. Stuckey, "Remembering the Future: Rhetorical Echoes of World War II and Vietnam in George Bush's Rhetoric on the Gulf War," *Communication Studies* 43(1992): 246-256.
85. Rachel Martin Harlow, "Agency and Agent in George Bush's Gulf War Rhetoric," in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 75.

86. Roy Joseph, "The New World Order: President Bush and the Post-Cold War Era," in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 88.
87. Joseph, "The New World Order," 98.
88. This should not suggest that scholars altogether ignored the subject. German, for example, argues that the United Nations rhetorically functions as a sort of "supernatural force" guiding action in the Gulf. However, this is distinct from arguing that the United Nations as an agent confers authority onto other argument, as she seems to suggest that U.N. action is more of a divine *fait accompli* than a secular justification for action. See German, "Invoking the Glorious War," 296.
89. These materials will be supported by secondary materials, including books and periodicals, and full-text research databases when available, in addition to scholarly published materials.

CHAPTER II

AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY RHETORIC:

AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND THE CONSTRAINT OF REALISM

[O]ur power is the natural product of our virtue.

Reinhold Niebuhr, 1948¹

For rhetorical scholars, rhetoric is neither a substitute nor a surrogate for policy. Rhetorical scholar Martin J. Medhurst explained that rhetoric is accurately conceived as an art “with both practical and productive dimensions” including the “accomplishment of certain goals.”² Medhurst offered this argument in response to those critics of presidential rhetoric who viewed it as a demagogic and deceptive alternative to political action.³ Most accurately, scholars of presidential rhetoric view policy as indivisible from the rhetoric used to articulate it. George H.W. Bush, however, believed that the two were clearly distinct.⁴

That distinction became more relevant in that Bush’s aversion to rhetoric bore parallels to the arguments made by foreign policy realists against rhetoric. Bush speechwriter Dan McGroarty cautioned that although the President “didn’t fancy himself as a Kennebunk-bred Kissinger,” the President remained well aware of the need to temper his rhetoric by both avoiding excessive foreign policy moralizing and the use of arguments based solely in the realists’ balance-of-power orientation.⁵ McGroarty indicated that American audiences were likely to eschew arguments premised solely in terms of amoral national interest.

It may work in a European context, it may work in other parts of the planet, but I do not think it will work in an American context. I think it misses something that people see as important, the character of the country and who we are. And the individual who tries to do that will literally at some point cease to be understood as speaking about the kinds of things that America can do.⁶

Research by social scientist Matthew S. Hirschberg validated a similar claim in a series of studies on cognitive perceptions of American foreign policy, arguing that the American people were more likely to support foreign policy actions if they were convinced these actions were consistent with moral goals.⁷

During the Cold War, however, this distinction mattered little as morally oriented rhetoric often served realist foreign policy interests. McGroarty, in a fellowship proposal to the Council on Foreign Relations in 1991, referred to the relationship between realism and rhetoric as “having the allure of a shotgun wedding.”⁸ Rhetoric during the Cold War, he argued, failed to rouse the ire of realists because in “rallying the faithful against communist ideology,” rhetoric also “served the interest of realists opposed to Soviet power.”⁹ When the Cold War was over, fear existed that the “moralistic bombast” of rhetoric would no longer suit the needs of the emerging moral situation.

Bush’s Post-Cold War rhetoric, by nature of its place in history, might have been expected to differ from that of his predecessor. Unconstrained by the need to engage in “moralistic bombast,” realists could relegate rhetoric to the idealist camp.¹⁰ But McGroarty’s proposal cautioned against such a suggestion, arguing that

In the post-Cold War world, this consonance of pragmatism and principle can no longer be assumed. Realists must recognize that, in America, rhetoric will always be the lever by which we move policy.¹¹

To that end, he argued that Bush’s rhetoric in Desert Storm succeeded not only by offering arguments familiar to foreign policy realists in favor of the war but also in embracing the moral expectation associated with American foreign policy rhetoric. McGroarty noted that this juxtaposition of realism and American exceptionalism played a significant role in Bush’s rhetorical success because depending solely on realist argument

without a larger ideal would have rendered far more precarious support for the American mission in the Gulf.¹²

What follows is an effort to explain how that juxtaposition operated. In this chapter, I begin by exploring the different conceptions of foreign policy rhetoric held by Bush, foreign policy realists, and scholars of presidential rhetoric. In light of Bush's aversion to morally oriented rhetoric, prior rhetorical conventions embracing American exceptionalism made it a necessary component of American foreign policy rhetoric. I conclude this chapter by arguing that Bush's rhetoric differed from his Presidential predecessor in two ways. First, it differed because of its occurrence in a new post-Cold War. Second, it differed in its rhetorical juxtaposition of American exceptionalism and realism within the rhetoric itself, rather than the simple use of American exceptionalist rhetoric toward strategic realist foreign policy ends.

Bush and Foreign Policy Rhetoric

Speechwriter Mark W. Davis described the process of discovering the appropriate rhetorical persona for Bush, imagining that:

“Well if he's taciturn, if he's manly, if he says what he means and means what he says,” who is like that? And Gary Cooper came to mind. So I started writing a little bit as if I were writing for someone like Gary Cooper. That kind of gave me a mental trick that I used, not to really write for the President, but to get myself in the mood to write for the President.¹³

The Gary Cooper image was consonant with speechwriter Curt Smith's vivid description of Bush's attitude toward rhetoric as part of the “phony baloney ritual of politics.”¹⁴

Bush speechwriter Andrew Furgeson described the president's approach to politics as “pragmatic, not rhetorical.”¹⁵ Political scientist David Mervin argued that for Bush,

speechmaking was akin to campaigning, which he abhorred and considered distinct from the conduct of policy itself.¹⁶

Bush publicly reflected on this distinction in *A World Transformed* (co-written by Brent Scowcroft), where he described a conversation shared with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Bush cautioned the Soviet leader not to take hard-line American foreign policy rhetoric directed against U.S.-Soviet relations too seriously. Reminiscing with Gorbachev about rhetorical lessons learned from Chinese leader Mao Zedong, Bush told him to ignore “excessive bombast” and to “look at deeds and actions instead.”¹⁷ This anecdote is consistent with Bush’s description of his own approach to foreign policy as “prudence,” which entailed a more cautious approach to world affairs than what he perceived as the overly moralistic style of Reagan.¹⁸ As suggested above in the recollection of Andrew Furgeson, Bush and his staff often used the term “prudence” interchangeably with “pragmatism.” The President distinguished his public discourse on issues related to foreign policy, a product of his knowledge and experience, from the “lofty language” and “broad themes,” characterizing the “rhetoric” of others.¹⁹

Rhetorical scholars have not shared Bush’s distinction between rhetoric and political action. In his landmark 1968 article “The Rhetorical Situation,” Lloyd Bitzer argued that “a work of rhetoric is pragmatic. . . it functions ultimately to produce action or change in the world.”²⁰ Rhetoric is, in this vein, appropriately conceived of as symbolic action. Even political scientists concede that rhetoric is an essential component of policymaking, particularly foreign policy. Foreign policy decisions require public support for their own legitimacy. Edward C. Luck of Columbia University’s Center on

International Organizations and Institutions noted that in the conduct of foreign policy, “legitimacy matters.”²¹ Policymakers achieve this legitimacy through rhetoric.

Policy rhetors often draw that legitimacy from moral grounds. Political scientist Cecil V. Crabb, Jr. argued that the successful conduct of foreign policy could not capably dispense with the need to articulate policy in moral/idealistic terms. As he stated “the exercise of power by the United States abroad must be related to some ostensible, worthwhile human purpose (or at least intuitively sensed) by the American people.”²² Luck claimed that Americans believe that their country is “special” and find solace in “the principles and values” espoused by it.²³ For this reason, Bush could not simply rely on a strategic political articulation of the American interest in the Persian Gulf devoid of any reference to those values and principles. The public demanded more of its leaders than that.²⁴ Bush’s speechwriters were well aware of this fact, as McGroarty noted:

Even if one were a dyed-in-the-wool realist and inclined toward *realpolitik* . . . as a speechwriter I would stop and say, “Hmm *realpolitik*, not an interesting borrowing from a foreign language. I wonder if it will translate to the American public as they think about who they are in the world. Maybe not . . .” I don’t think a realist can speak in the language of realism for any sustained period of time and actually talk to the American people.²⁵

Balancing these perspectives was critical to the success of foreign policy. Rhetorical scholars Denise M. Bostdorf and Steven R. Goldzwig, for example, have argued that Kennedy’s failure to balance idealism and pragmatism successfully in his Vietnam War rhetoric would have likely posed problems for him had he lived through the conflict, problems that ultimately overwhelmed his successor Lyndon B. Johnson.²⁶

Bush’s distinction between rhetoric and pragmatic action mirrored the realist distinction between ideology and action. Realism, the broadly defined school of international relations that included prominent scholars and policy makers with

connections to the Bush administration, held that the state was critical in the maintenance of international order. In that states constantly sought to maximize their power, the role of the state was to maintain its existence at all costs and to prevent other states from challenging that existence. Realists alleged that realism reflected empirical reality rather than the normative reality characterizing rhetoric.

Realist Henry Kissinger, for instance, referred to “the symbolic aspect of foreign policy” as distinct from “the substantive component.”²⁷ Like Bush, however, the realists also failed to recognize the rhetorical nature of their own enterprise. Political scientist Francis A. Beer and rhetorical scholar Robert Hariman claimed that realism’s “anti-rhetorical” stance was itself an appeal to ethos, as “one’s objective understanding of the elements of power” provided the realists with intellectual authority over all foreign policy claims.²⁸ Realist scholar John J. Mearschimer argued that this indifference to rhetoric and the embrace of “objective” detachment resulted in some members of the political elite and the public regarding realism “with hostility” due to their perception of realism’s amorality.²⁹

This perception may reflect an over simplification of the realist position *vis-à-vis* democratic politics and the role of rhetoric in the public sphere. Political scientist Joel H. Rosenthal emphasized the significance of “politics” to the realist endeavor, arguing that the perceived amorality of the realists was simply a misinterpretation of their caution “against pursuing desirable moral goals at the risk of disastrous political consequences.”³⁰ Rhetorical scholar G. Thomas Goodnight argued that the realist rhetorical position simply opposes those who “read history, interpret action, measure choice, or advise policy from a position outside the political realm.”³¹ Goodnight maintained that although realist

approaches to the public sphere varied, there remained “the Aristotelian notion that civic deliberation resides at the conjunction of politics, ethics and prudential judgment.”³²

Scholars of rhetorical studies would recognize a rhetorical component in realist prudential judgment that realists and many of their critics would not. Hariman called prudence “the capacity for effective political response to contingent events.”³³ While Hariman acknowledged the ambiguity of his definition, he ultimately associated prudence with the rhetor who “has mastered the nuances of a particular art in order to perform a script capable of motivating advantageous responses from an audience.”³⁴ Although Bush seemed to embody this conception of prudence, he would likely reject such a characterization of his policymaking role as performance. Such a rejection, however, would ignore the relationship between prudence and rhetoric, particularly as it applies to policymaking.

Hariman and Beer identified three modes of prudence: normative, calculative and performative. They described normative prudence as “reasoning that manages the incommensurability of goods,” which they argue was often oversimplified as “ethical reasoning in a political context.”³⁵ This simplification often resulted in the dismissal of normative prudence as idealism, in that it assumes that there is a “radical plurality of goods” that are contested in a political struggle rather than the scarcity of goods for realists who more narrowly define those resources. Where normative prudence was centrally concerned with the ends of a course of action, calculative prudence was concerned with the means of policy and involved the gathering of knowledge in order to make “valid predictions about specific actions.”³⁶ This definition of prudence was consistent with both Bush’s and some realists’ conception of that term, in that it

centralized the means rather than the ends of action as the central component of reasoning.

The third mode of prudence that Hariman and Beer identified, performative prudence, acknowledged the public dimension of reasoning as it concerned “the effective performance of one’s role” which ultimately involved the management of “appearances for political effect.”³⁷ Hariman and Beer argued that prudent scholars and policymakers could best understand prudence as involving all three modes, while they cautioned against the reliance on any one mode. As they noted:

Normative prudence is prone to moralizing and excessive credulity. Calculative prudence is disposed to isolation, hypertechnicality, and paranoia. Performative prudence is susceptible to forgetting about effects amidst the intrinsic satisfaction of putting on a good show.³⁸

Hariman and Beer also found that although realist reliance on calculative prudence might prove otherwise, realists often did acknowledge that the performative dimension of prudence was indispensable to the conduct of foreign policy, albeit with some hesitation. In the Bush White House, for instance, there was occasionally tension between the speechwriting office and other executive departments concerning the President’s public utterances. Concerning foreign policy, much of that tension existed between the National Security Council and the speechwriters. As Bush’s Director of Communications, David Demarest noted:

The NSC, and that staff, view themselves as kind of the last word in foreign policy. . . We had occasions where there would be some real arguments that the speech writers are to write the speech and not the NSC. The NSC is to provide the content, and so there were several instances . . . we had some donnybrooks over “This is the President’s speech, this isn’t an NSC speech.”³⁹

These events were similarly recollected by NSC member Richard Haass:

I think that there is a quite a structural tension between the speechwriters' fundamental policy work. The speechwriters believe that they ought to have principal control over the President's public speaking and quite honestly, I did not.⁴⁰

Bush could not dismiss the significance of the performative dimension of prudence, nor could he ignore the normative dimension, both of which he seemed to associate with Reagan's style, while embracing the calculative. Successful policymaking required a balance of the three.

If political observers solely emphasized the normative and calculative dimensions of prudence, then Bush's ability to gain strong political support for action against the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the face of such a clear violation of state sovereignty seemed to require little rhetorical exertion by the president. Public opinion research supported this conclusion. For example, political scientist Bruce Jentleson, in two separate studies on public opinion and the use of military force (the second study was coauthored by his fellow political scientist Rebecca L. Britton), found that the public was more likely to support actions that restrained state aggression than those that sought to rebuild states.⁴¹ These measures of support assumed an interpretation of events where the public somehow objectively interprets "state aggression" and state building.

The assumption that gaining support for the war was effortless, however, ignored the two fundamental difficulties faced by the Bush administration. The first of these concerned the degree to which the public initially opposed military action in the region. One study of daily opinion change during the Gulf crisis, as the media often referred to the invasion of Kuwait, found that as "the two nations slipped into crisis, the more negative the public became about U.S. actions."⁴² Demarest described polling numbers

measuring “whether people would be supportive of armed conflict in the Gulf” as poor in November of 1990, largely related to the invasion of Kuwait occurring “in the midst of the budget negotiations, and in the middle of the off year elections,” an environment not conducive to bipartisan cooperation.⁴³ That cooperation was further complicated by the nature of midterm election year, as Bush campaigned on behalf of Republican congressional candidates who opposed incumbent Democrats. By campaigning against these incumbents, Bush often alienated those in the opposing party whose support he urgently needed to attain his foreign policy gains.⁴⁴

A second difficulty that the President would face concerned support from the international community. Those who assumed that gaining support for U.S. action through multilateral institutions ignored the tensions between the U.S. and the international community, particularly as manifested in the characterization of that community in American foreign policy rhetoric.⁴⁵ This animosity only complicated the ability of any rhetor to justify cooperation with that community through performative prudence.

Although foreign policy scholars like G. John Ikenberry argued that the U.S. maintained relatively stable relations with its World War II allies through the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, commitments to participation in other multilateral regimes, particularly the United Nations, varied.⁴⁶ JoAnn Fagot Aviel, a professor of international relations and member of the board of directors for the United Nations Association of San Francisco, noted that conservatives in the United States “see support for a global community and multilateral organizations themselves as a subversion of national sovereignty.”⁴⁷ Prominent political figures like former Senator Jesse Helms of North

Carolina, who once held considerable sway over U.S. foreign policy as the Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, vigorously maintained similar views.⁴⁸

From a strictly calculative prudential perspective, those supporting the assertion that the war required little rhetorical effort also ignored the tangible political benefits that the president might gain by building rhetorical support for military action. A 1995 study, for example, found that a televised 1986 address by President Reagan on U.S. military action against Libya resulted in immediate positive influence on his public popularity and longer-term support for his broader anti-terrorism military initiatives.⁴⁹ There is little doubt that Bush himself felt that demonstrating his expertise in foreign policy, a practice he would not necessarily recognize as rhetorical in nature, would ultimately benefit his presidency. Speechwriter Mark W. Davis noted that the President took seriously the responsibility of crafting his foreign policy rhetoric.

He originated every major foreign policy speech he ever gave and he finalized it with his own hand. He was his own writer and editor in that respect. We helped him along, but the idea that someone could hand him a major foreign policy speech and he would just read it is balderdash.⁵⁰

Perhaps ironically, U.S. animus toward the international community is both contrary to, and a product of its own orientation in American exceptionalism. Stewart Patrick, a research associate at New York University's Center for International Cooperation, has defined American Exceptionalism "as a pervasive faith in the uniqueness, immutability, and superiority of the country's founding liberal principles, accompanied by a conviction that the United States has a special destiny among nations."⁵¹ This faith, however, resulted in countervailing impulses. One impulse favored multilateralism in order to promote "open, universal community under law in which countries might pursue common security, prosperity and welfare."⁵² It also

produced the opposite impulse to go it alone in order to protect the “United States from corruption or dilution by foreign contact” and to protect the country’s ability to protect its own unique national interest.⁵³ In the following section, I elaborate on the role of American exceptionalism in foreign policy rhetoric.

American Exceptionalism as the Basis for American Foreign Policy Rhetoric

American exceptionalism is the belief that the U.S. is preeminent among all nations, and is thus destined to play a paramount and providential role in history. American exceptionalism, or more explicitly the rhetoric that thematically embraced that concept, emerged from the broader American political culture, which scholars have referred to as civil religion. Civil religion referred to the common political dialogue and language governing the American political culture, relying heavily on religious symbology derived from traditional Judeo-Christian practice. Sociologist Robert Bellah described civil religion as “a theme that lies very deep in the American tradition, namely the obligation, both collective and individual, to carry out God’s will on earth.”⁵⁴ American Exceptionalism rhetorically conferred that obligation on the state itself.

Civil religious language has held a number of appeals for rhetors, particularly in its contrasting qualities of ambiguity and moral certainty. It projected transcendent moral authority while its lack of an explicit sectarian allegiance prevented it from becoming overly divisive.⁵⁵ Political scientist Thomas Langston associated the rhetorical flexibility of American civil religion with its consistent themes of vice and virtue. He quoted former President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s famous campaign ode to Alexis de Tocqueville in stating, “America is great because she is good.” Langston sees the quote as representative of the central tenet of any civil religion “that virtue will be rewarded and

vice punished.”⁵⁶ The rhetoric of American exceptionalism clearly embodies such issues of virtue and vice. America succeeds because she is virtuous. When this reasoning was applied to foreign policy rhetoric, it could be surmised that other states followed a less virtuous path.

Although the first mention of America as “exceptional” occurred in Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*,⁵⁷ the idea was present in the rhetoric of the early Puritans.

According to Ernest G. Bormann, the Puritans depicted their new world as one that could serve as a beacon to the rest of the world “to light the way for the Reformation still to be accomplished in Old England and in all of Europe.”⁵⁸ Rhetorical scholar Ronald F. Reid has argued that in doing so, they simply applied Old Testament typology to their own experiences, wherein the Puritans depicted their flight from England as a contemporary embodiment of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt.⁵⁹ The Puritans then coupled this with New Testament Millenarianism whereby the Puritans became God’s chosen people, an argument so embraced by secular rhetors that it had “profound rhetorical implications for American history.”⁶⁰

Rhetors of the American Revolution embraced this secularized variant of American exceptionalism. Amidst their talk of rebellion against the British Empire, there existed a stream of revolutionary discourse suggesting that revolution was the destiny of the future United States. By revolution’s end, the notion of America as the “city on a hill,” was less a cliché than an enthymematic civil religious premise underlying all public arguments on America’s role at home and in the world. For example, William Findley, a Pennsylvania politician in the second through fifth Congress noted as far back as 1796 that Americans “formed a character peculiar to themselves, and in some respects distinct

from that of other nations.”⁶¹ Thomas Jefferson argued that there was “but one system of ethics for men and for nations,” a sentiment shared among the nation’s founders but rejected in Europe where early forms of realism had taken root.⁶² So deep was Jefferson’s belief in the unique ethos of the United States of America, that historian John M. Murris has attributed the use of “American” as a term of identification to Jefferson. Murris claimed that early post revolutionary nationalists who were political adherents of Jefferson were among the first to name themselves “Americans.”⁶³ As Jefferson noted of America in correspondence with James Madison in 1809:

We should have such an empire for liberty as she has never surveyed since the creation: and I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self government.⁶⁴

The generic nature of the language governing American exceptionalism enabled a wide range of audience adaptation without exclusion. It provided American rhetors with a rich vocabulary and tradition with which to share a common heritage in the ideals of the nation’s foundation. Because the shared heritage of Americans was not always a product of family history or geography, civil religious discourse gave Americans the ability to adopt a common historically derived language with which to attain unity. Civil religious discourse formed the basis for a common but somewhat ambiguous national culture. Rhetorical scholar Mary Stuckey has argued that Americans, including those largely excluded from full participation in American life, remain united in their faith in American ideals. Americans maintained this faith even when they find the historical execution of those ideals profoundly lacking.⁶⁵ Philosophy scholar Will Kymlicka described such a culture as essential to the nation’s identity, providing “a meaningful context of choice for people, without limiting their ability to question or revise particular values or beliefs.”⁶⁶

American exceptionalism justified a wide array of political and social policies after the emergence of the Union. It remained such a pervasive component of American thought and rhetoric that historian Richard Hofstadter claimed, “It has been our fate as a nation not to have ideologies but to be one.”⁶⁷ American exceptionalism justified the expansion of the United States across the North American continent through Manifest Destiny and American imperialism in the Southern Hemisphere.⁶⁸

Professor of English Lyon Rathbun claimed that the appeal of American expansion lay in its “theologized” conception of the nation, which more readily provided comfort to its polity than secularized arguments and its pursuit of an amoral, secularized rationality.⁶⁹ It also provided broad justification to oppose actions taken by the American government. Some extended the trope of the “city on a hill” to imply that American policy was best served by making this nation a model for the rest of the world. No less a figure than Charles Darwin connected his theory of natural selection to the greatness of America, noting “there is apparently much truth in the belief that the wonderful progress of the United States as well as the character of the people are the results of natural selection.”⁷⁰

Others, most notably Theodore Roosevelt, believed that America’s exceptional role required a missionary posture to spread the promise of this nation throughout the world, a vision of American frontier extended throughout the Western Hemisphere.⁷¹ Roosevelt was among the many adherents of American historian Frederick Jackson Turner, who postulated that the settlement of the American frontier shaped the unique character of Americans.⁷² Turner suggested that spatial limitations of that frontier made expansion of indomitable American ideals inevitable. American exceptionalism, it

seemed, caused the nation to swell with its national values and principles such that the nation could no longer geographically contain them. As historian Donald K. Pickens has described it, “Americans, combining Puritan moralism and the moral theories of the enlightenment, with the millennial hopes of Protestantism” pursued their material aspirations through a “sentimental agrarianism” in which all Americans, narrowly defined, “held a material stake in society.”⁷³ That stake spread through the frontier and ultimately, outward into the world as a crusading force.

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger argued that the primary exponent of this crusading variant of American exceptionalism was Woodrow Wilson himself.⁷⁴ Wilson not only spoke of an America endowed with greatness by the creator, but also spoke of American exceptionalism as creating a duty to defend American democratic ideals throughout the world. “We do not confine our enthusiasm for individualism and free national development to the incidents and movement of affairs which affect only ourselves,” he argued in his 1915 State of the Union Address.⁷⁵ Wilson then alleged that Americans “deemed it as important that our neighbors should be free from all outside domination as that we ourselves should be.”⁷⁶

Wilson’s legacy in American foreign policy was profound and frequently cited as an ideological impulse unto itself. Historian Anthony Gaughan found that Wilson’s own impulses as an intellectual and a professor of government enabled him to locate American exceptionalism as an explanation for sectional discord during the American Civil War, as the war’s outcome made the country “a great United, indivisible, indestructible instrument in His hands for the accomplishment of these great things.”⁷⁷

Diplomatic scholar Robert W. Tucker argued that Wilson's influence was so profound that every president since FDR has alleged to be a "Wilsonian."⁷⁸

Wilson owed his profound influence in large part to his unique embrace of rhetoric as a vehicle for leadership. Rhetorician Robert Kraig observed that Wilson sought "to reconstitute American government so that oratorical statesmen would play a dominant role" and an impulse which "inspired him to recreate the presidency in a way that permanently changed the character of the institution."⁷⁹ Rhetorical scholar James R. Andrews maintained that Wilson was a transformative rhetorical figure who effectively "transformed the long-held vision of America as a shining example of liberty for the world to emulate to its embodiment as the self sacrificing defender of liberty."⁸⁰

Scholar Jason C. Flanagan elaborated on Andrews' work, and found that Wilson reconceived of America as a crusading state championing the rights of humankind in contrast to the emerging image of Germany as the "violation" of such rights.⁸¹ Flanagan specifically tied this argument into Philip Wander's earlier conception of "prophetic dualism," which divided adversaries into competing camps with one acting in accordance with God's will while the other acted contrary to that will. Flanagan traced this mode of thinking more directly to Wilson's rhetoric even before the onset of World War I.⁸² Rhetorician John F. Wilson long ago observed that Wilson's rhetoric "is echoing still in American political discourse."⁸³ Such a claim should come as little surprise given those who have emerged in his wake. More specifically, rhetorical scholar Thomas Kane alleged that those most directly responsible for U.S. foreign policy between and after the wars were "products of the age of Woodrow Wilson."⁸⁴

Although World War II might provide a clearer narrative variation of the Manichean scheme governing foreign policy rhetoric, wherein the Nazi's came to typify evil, these ideas still echoed their Wilsonian origins. This continued through the Cold War. Richard A. Melanson argued that U.S. participation in international affairs, particularly in response to the threat of Soviet expansionism at the end of World War II, inevitably drifted toward a consensus position that favored continued post-war engagement rather than a retreat into isolationism.⁸⁵ While opinions on different Cold War era policies and their respective levels of efficacy varied among Americans and the foreign policy elite, there remained a stable consensus suggesting that the United States remain engaged in the world to counter communism. While the material policy options varied, the rhetoric of the Cold War retained a consistent theme of Manichean opposition to the U.S.S.R. America was right to challenge the threat posed by communist expansion because America remained *exceptional*, continuing to embody Wilson's crusading state.

The foreign policy discourse that occurred in this Cold War context was largely constrained by the possibility of nuclear conflict. As Richard Cherwitz and Kenneth Zagacki claimed, "World leaders, even the sometimes bellicose President Reagan, realize that contemporary world wars are best waged on symbolic fronts: the alternative is nuclear genocide."⁸⁶ This genocidal possibility provided a unique justification for the examination of the rhetoric of American foreign policy. American Cold War rhetoric was largely concerned with the justification of extensive U.S. foreign policy efforts in challenging communist expansion and ideologies. American exceptionalism played a critical role in all U.S. depictions of that conflict, positing America's role as one of global evangelization of the American ethos. Professor of history David Hoogland Noon noted

that within the context of prophetic dualism, the “reputed greatness of the nation” has become “thoroughly universalized, abstracted, and separated from concrete foreign and domestic policies.”⁸⁷ This separation has proven problematic for adherents of realism, which has functioned, in many respects, as the private corollary to the public justification of foreign policy action provided by American exceptionalism.

Realism, Wilsonianism and the Reconfiguration of American Exceptionalism

Historian Robert J. McMahon referred to realism as the “dominant interpretive framework” used by scholars and policymakers in assessing the nature of international relations.⁸⁸ Scholars have traced realism back to the works of Thucydides and Machiavelli.⁸⁹ Although some in the United States claimed that American realism was a reaction to Wilsonian idealism, other realists found earlier American political manifestations of it. For example, Kissinger has described Theodore Roosevelt as an early adherent of realism, alleging that Roosevelt’s foreign policy dispositions did not solely emanate from a belief in the inherent greatness of his nation:

Roosevelt was convinced of America’s beneficent role in the world. . . . But unlike them, Roosevelt held that America had real foreign policy interests that went far beyond its interest in remaining unentangled. Roosevelt started from the premise that the United States was a power like any other, not a singular incarnation of virtue.⁹⁰

Realist scholar Robert G. Gilpin claimed that realism existed in polar opposition to idealism as it embraced a “pessimism regarding moral progress and human possibilities.”⁹¹ He identified what he believed to be the three primary assumptions of realist thinkers. First he posited that realist thinkers presuppose conflict as the natural state of affairs, as Hobbesian anarchy “is the rule; order justice, and morality are the exceptions.”⁹² Second, states defined the essence of social reality, as they were the sole

agents capable of influencing the international scene. The third assumption indicated that the acquisition of power was the primary source of human motivation such that “more noble goals will be lost unless one makes provision for one’s security in the power struggle among social groups.”⁹³

Hans J. Morgenthau went even further with regard to power as the essence of realist thought, arguing that the

struggle for power is universal in time and space and is an undeniable fact of experience. It cannot be denied that throughout historic time, regardless of social, economic and political conditions, states have met each other in contests for power.⁹⁴

Realism attempted to concretize interstate relations as a struggle for power. As mentioned above, realists did not consider realism amoral. These realists were apt to defend policy grounded in realism as essential to the realization of other more explicitly normative goals. Kraig, echoing earlier work by Beer and Hariman, noted that realism embraced a technical form of rhetoric rendering it resistant to criticism.⁹⁵ This is particularly effective as realists insisted that any dialogue on issues of foreign policy must embrace realist premises. To demonstrate realism’s hold on mainstream political thinking, Kraig offered the example of President Jimmy Carter. He claimed that Carter’s failures to adopt a comprehensive U.S. foreign policy recognizing the significance of human rights was due to his failure to use arguments oriented in realism. When Carter criticized a foreign policy establishment “obsessed with balance of power politics,” he incurred the wrath of American realists, tragically failing to reverse the hold of realism on understandings of the international scene.⁹⁶

That should not suggest that other Presidents did not engage in realist policies. To the contrary, American foreign policymakers often served two masters in the use of

American exceptionalism and realism. Kane, for instance, cited George Kennan as a disciple of Wilsonianism,⁹⁷ but others have also aptly described Kennan as a realist.⁹⁸

How can these ideas be reconciled?

James Arnt Aune provided a glimpse of such a rhetorical reconciliation in noting realism's limited appeal for "motivating mass audiences."⁹⁹ Aune indicated that there "may be a cycle of alternating 'realisms' and 'idealisms' in the discourse and practice of politics and international relations" that enabled realist rhetors to address their concerns in the public sphere.¹⁰⁰

Rosenthal described the paradoxical relationship between realists and American exceptionalism as one in which the realists themselves embraced exceptionalism, insofar as their policy arguments often situated American exceptionalism beneath the dignity of the conduct of foreign policy.¹⁰¹ In other words, the rhetorical justification of American foreign policy for moral ends rendered the nation less exceptional than it would otherwise be. Rosenthal claimed that this adherence to exceptionalism came from the belief that America best served as "the illustration of an ideal" rather than the belief that America had a "special moral role in world affairs."¹⁰² Foreign policy, he alleged of the realists, should embody American values without imposing those values on others.

That ability of political elites to operate within the confines of that constraint, the successful exercise of "performative prudence," might be a determinant in political success. Rosenthal described Dean Acheson, President Harry S Truman's Secretary of state, as a realist who also functioned as "an expert practical operator," defining his skills as largely rhetorical in nature.¹⁰³ For instance, in defending assistance to Greece before a congressional delegation, Acheson argued that if the Soviets succeeded in the region

“like apples in a barrel infected by the rotten one, the corruption of Greece would infect Iran and all of the East.”¹⁰⁴ Acheson’s argument so impressed Senator Arthur Vandenburg that he said, “If you say that to the Congress and the country, I will support you and I believe most of the members will do the same.”¹⁰⁵ Rosenthal contrasted this rhetorical success with the relative inability, in later years, of realist Keenan to retain his own influence in the corridors of foreign policy power.

For Bush’s predecessor Ronald Reagan, realism could be usefully described as a both a constraint and a goal of foreign policy rhetoric. Reagan, in that same sense, also embodied the clear and reciprocal function that realism and the rhetoric of American exceptionalism played in concert during the Cold War. Rhetorical scholar Robert Ivie offered a broad explanation of the President’s rhetorical vision of the Cold War as “a simple black and white struggle between the forces of good and evil,” making it difficult for Reagan to pacify world opinion and leading to potentially debilitating levels of military spending.¹⁰⁶

However, such an understanding largely neglects the more strategic components of Reagan’s Cold War rhetoric. Political scientist Charles Hantz, for instance, found Reagan’s foreign policy rhetoric was more constrained by realist strategic considerations than many assumed. Specifically, Hantz argued that Reagan was more apt to exercise his more ideologically oriented views when referring to less developed regimes opposing the U.S., while he demonstrated views that were more pragmatic when addressing issues related to the Soviet Union or China. In another case, rhetorical scholars Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones assessed Reagan’s speech at the Brandenburg Gate, and found that despite views to the contrary, Reagan’s legendary exhortation to “tear down that

wall” appeared in a speech carefully shaped to reflect a more pragmatic perspective in addressing the Cold War.¹⁰⁷

Reagan’s rhetorical success could be described as much a product of his bellicosity in rhetorically challenging opponents of the United States as anything else. By talking tough, Reagan may have helped to shape policy in the areas mentioned by bringing pressure upon those states. In this way, the direct and aggressive rhetoric of the Cold War developed a superior bargaining system for the President whereby these states might come forth to avoid potential U.S. aggression. However, there existed no guarantee that in the absence of superpower conflict, states might continue to be, or not to be, compelled by aggressive American rhetoric to do anything at all.

Worse still, accounts of Reagan’s rhetorical success fail to account for some of the constraints that his foreign policy successes and failures might have created for his successor. Bush not only had to deal with comparisons to Reagan’s rhetorical style, but some of Reagan’s rhetoric either complicated Bush’s rhetorical endeavors or failed altogether to address lingering concerns among the American body politic.

With regard to the United Nations, for example, the Reagan administration had what could be described as an adversarial rhetorical relationship. Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Reagan’s ambassador to the United Nations, situated U.S. tensions with the organization within the context of the Cold War. As she argued in an address at Arizona State University in 1981:

Our relative isolation inside the United Nations stands in very sharp contrast to the position of the Soviet Union, which, though it often behaves like an international outlaw, is invariably supported by its own client states and a certain number of fellow travelers. It never stands alone in the United Nations.¹⁰⁸

During Reagan's tenure, the U.N. was largely scorned in U.S. policy circles, which was likely among the reasons that the U.S. reneged on its financial obligations to the organization, leaving the U.S. over one billion dollars in arrears by the end of the Reagan era.¹⁰⁹ Whatever problems, however, that Reagan found with the U.N., rhetorical success with regard to the U.S. position opposing the invasion of Kuwait demanded the potential legitimizing force that the institution could muster. As David Demarest noted,

I think that we felt that you deal with the international bodies that you have and the U.N, for all of its problems and challenges was the one organization where everybody was at the table and would be able to be a validator, in a sense, of what our position was.¹¹⁰

Reagan rhetorically complicated the use of the United Nations as a legitimizing agent in foreign policy discourse in such a fashion that Bush would be forced to establish new arguments in its defense.

Much of Reagan's rhetorical success lay in his ability to employ the Cold War struggle as a frame for justifying American foreign policy ventures. But as demonstrated above, after the Vietnam War, the belief in American aversion to war casualties was a powerful constraint on the nature of foreign policy ventures. Reagan's rhetoric as a Presidential candidate in 1981 attempted to challenge the assumption that America had somehow sustained a national defeat by labeling the war as a "noble cause," an argument that had adverse political ramifications for his campaign.¹¹¹

Reagan paid a minor political price for his revisionist perspective on the war, but in doing so learned a lesson about the cultural understanding of Vietnam. His administration was not ignorant of the significance of Vietnam in the minds of Americans. Many Americans were painfully reminded of these risks in the October 23, 1983 attack on the U.S. Marines barracks in Lebanon. Reagan could not easily overcome

American hesitation, opting for two distinct strategies. The first strategy involved replacing fear of futility in Vietnam with images of short-term, low-risk military action in Grenada.¹¹² The second concerned the Reagan doctrine, which enabled the White House to avoid both direct military confrontation with forces that they publicly portrayed as Soviet proxies, while also allowing them to avoid rhetorically questions related to the direct military engagement of American forces.¹¹³ In neither the rhetorical use of Grenada nor the Reagan doctrine, however, was Reagan capable of completely allaying the concern among political elites that Americans were free of the lingering memory of Vietnam, a fact that would become abundantly clear in Bush's references to the problems of the Vietnam War.¹¹⁴

In spite of the aforementioned examples, this particular case is concerned with performative prudence at the highest levels of foreign policy authority. Few would argue that realism rarely serves as the explicit justification for any foreign policy action. For instance, the Persian Gulf remained an area of strategic significance to the United States because of Western dependence on petroleum exports from that region for energy. The President highlighted this fact in an essay in *Newsweek* published on November 26, 1990, where he argued that Hussein's invasion of Iraq was tantamount to economic blackmail that threatened the world's access to vital energy supplies and particularly imperiled "fledgling democracies." "Energy security is *national* security," he argued, "and we must be prepared to act accordingly."¹¹⁵

But using energy security as a primary justification for acting in the region was recognized by members of Bush's own administration as politically perilous, as noted in a memo dated August 17, 1990, from White House domestic policy adviser Jim

Pinkerton to speechwriter Chriss Winston (“Subject: VFW Address Speech Draft”). Pinkerton indicated that among the “spectrum of justifications for our current military” that there existed a range of effectiveness from the most persuasive concerning “world peace and the rule of law” to the less persuasive (to which Pinkerton parenthetically added “though legitimate”) arguments concerning the region’s “flow of oil.” He noted that this “latter argument will be attacked as a materialist rationale: we are asking American boys to die for oil and cheap gasoline.”¹¹⁶

The memo further pointed toward another argument that opponents of the military build-up in Kuwait were likely to make, namely that American forces “are protecting undemocratic regimes” which caused Pinkerton to write that “whenever possible,” the administration’s justifications should center around the aforementioned “rule of law/world peace” arguments.¹¹⁷

Bush’s Gulf War rhetoric attempted to blend realist intention with the rhetoric of American exceptionalism. The prior example notwithstanding, Bush engaged in a more explicit use of realist argument in the public than had prior presidents. While one could conjecture as to *why* this is the case, McGroarty’s aforementioned concerns about the appeal of pure realist rhetoric seem to raise some concerns about its use. Explaining how Bush’s rhetorical juxtaposition of realism and American exceptionalism can demonstrate how such rhetors may allay such concerns. In making this case, I argue that Bush faced three distinct constraints. First, multilateral action through the United Nations, a concept anathema to realists, is justified as a realist policy option, as Bush subordinated the U.N. as an agency for explicit U.S. domination in the effort to oust Iraq from Kuwait. Second, still haunted by the lingering shadows of Vietnam, Bush took great pains to ensure that he

distinguished Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm from the war in Vietnam. The third constraint occurred only in the retrospective assessment of the military's performance in the Persian Gulf, for while problems arose and Hussein ultimately retained power in Iraq, Bush historically defined the terms of victory such that what military analyst Jeffrey Record labels a "Hollow Victory" was anything but.¹¹⁸ As victory is a term with no concrete strategic meaning, Bush constructed one that rendered the short-term application of military force in service of a specific and narrowly tailored objective the only meaning that matters. While such a definition seems overly technical, Bush provided a normative emphasis suggesting that expediency has both strategic and moral dimensions: America was exceptional because its military can successfully accomplish narrowly defined tasks.

In the remainder of this dissertation, I will more firmly establish the previously mentioned arguments as to how President Bush successfully made public arguments with premises grounded in realism by combining these arguments with the rhetoric of American exceptionalism in his justification of and for United States military action in the Persian Gulf between August of 1990 and March of 1991. As president, Bush adopted a previously unfamiliar role that encompassed the type of symbolic leadership in which he had expressed some skepticism. In embracing this role during the Gulf War, he combined his enthusiasm for realism with a public embrace of the transcendent ideals of American exceptionalism.

Notes

1. "American Pride and Power," *American Scholar* 18(1948): 393-394.
2. "Introduction: Tale of Two Constructs: The Rhetorical Presidency Versus Presidential Rhetoric," from *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), xiv.
3. Most specifically, Medhurst was responding to those who embraced the conception of the *rhetorical presidency* as initially conceived by political scientists James W. Ceaser, Glen E. Thurow, Jeffrey K. Tulis and Joseph M. Bessette in "The Rise of the Rhetorical Presidency," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 11(1981): 158-171. These authors would revisit the concept often, perhaps most notably in Tulis' own *The Rhetorical Presidency* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Paperbacks, 1987). Medhurst's introduction to *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency* challenges this conception of presidential rhetoric as extra-constitutional deception with a notion of "presidential rhetoric" wherein study involves application of the precepts of rhetoric to "specific presidential utterances."
4. See Ryan J. Barilleaux and Mark J. Rozell, *Power and Prudence: The Presidency of George H.W. Bush* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 72, and *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006).
5. Personal telephone interview with Daniel McGroarty on November 14, 2006.
6. Personal telephone interview with Daniel McGroarty.

7. Matthew S. Hirschberg, *Perpetuating Patriotic Perceptions: The Cognitive Function of the Cold War* (Westport, CT: Prager Publishers, 1993).
8. Entitled “The New World in Which We Live: Realism and Rhetoric in American Foreign Policy,” McGroarty’s proposal addressed the relationship between rhetoric and realism in the Post-Cold War. The draft proposal, which McGroarty had not recalled seeing for years, was discovered in the Bush archives, From the Office of Speech Writing, 9 Series: Tony Snow, Subject File, 1988-1993, Box 6, “Persian Gulf War 1990-1991 [OA8680], George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX. McGroarty, however, abandoned his plans to pursue that fellowship in October of 1991 after being offered, in addition to his then-current position as Deputy Director of Speechwriting, the title of Special Assistant to the President and a position on Bush’s 1992 reelection campaign. He revealed this in a personal telephone interview, on November 14, 2006.
9. McGroarty, “The New World in Which We Live,” 2.
10. McGroarty, “The New World in Which We Live,” 2.
11. McGroarty, “The New World in Which We Live,” 2.
12. McGroarty, “The New World in Which We Live,” 2.
13. Personal telephone interview with Mark W. Davis, January 24, 2007.
14. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 72.
15. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 72.
16. David Mervin, *George Bush and the Guardianship Presidency* (New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 225-226.

17. George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1998), 5.
18. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 25.
19. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 66.
20. Bitzer's article is excerpted from *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Carl Burghardt, (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 1995), 59. It was originally published in *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1(1968): 1-14.
21. Edward C. Luck, "The United States, International Organizations, and the Quest for Legitimacy," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2002), 47.
22. Cecil V. Crabb, Jr., *American Diplomacy and the Pragmatic Tradition*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Press, 1989), 183.
23. Luck, "The United States, International Organizations, and the Quest for Legitimacy," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 53.
24. I am not suggesting that certain audiences could not find such arguments compelling. Political scientist Raymond A. Moore, for example, argues that one of the more apparent U.S. interests in containing Iraq was related to its short-term threat to the Persian Gulf and its longer-term threat to Israel, and to regional Arab states as Hussein had violated the implicit taboo against inter-Arab conflict. Moore's argument focuses on the strategic implications rather than the moral implications. See "The Case FOR the War," in *The Presidency and the Persian*

- Gulf War*, ed. Marcia Lynn Whicker, James P. Pffifner, and Raymond A. Moore (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1993), 95-96.
25. Personal telephone interview with Daniel McGroarty.
 26. "Idealism and Pragmatism in American Foreign Policy Rhetoric: The Case of John F. Kennedy and Vietnam," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 24(1994): 515-530. Bostdorff and Goldzwig specifically argue that while Kennedy relied on both idealism and pragmatism in his addresses, only one of those principles tended to dominate a particular presidential utterance, with idealism dominating Kennedy's prepared addresses, while in press conferences and less prepared remarks, the president focused on pragmatism.
 27. Henry Kissinger, "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy" *Daedalus* 95 (1966): 516.
 28. Francis A. Beer and Robert Hariman, "Realism and Rhetoric in International Relations," in *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, eds. Francis A Beer and Robert Hariman (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 6.
 29. John J. Mearschimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19 (1994/1995): 48.
 30. Joel H. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists: Political Realism, Responsible Power, and American Culture in the Nuclear Age* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 47.
 31. G. Thomas Goodnight, "Hans Morgenthau in Defense of the National Interest: On Rhetoric, Realism, and the Public Sphere," in *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical*

- Turn in International Relations*, eds. Francis A Beer and Robert Hariman (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 145.
32. Goodnight, "Hans Morgenthau in Defense of the National Interest," in *Post-Realism*, 145.
 33. Robert Hariman, "Prudence/Performance," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 21 (1991): 26.
 34. Hariman, "Prudence/Performance," 27.
 35. Hariman and Beer, "What Would be Prudent?: Forms of Reasoning in World Politics," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 1(1998): 305.
 36. Hariman and Beer, "What Would be Prudent," 305.
 37. Hariman and Beer, "What Would be Prudent," 308.
 38. Hariman and Beer, "What Would be Prudent," 310.
 39. Personal telephone interview with David Demarest on January 16, 2007.
 40. Personal telephone interview with Richard Haass on December 22, 2006.
 41. Bruce Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public: Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *International Studies Quarterly* 36 (1992): 49-73, and Bruce Jentleson and Rebecca L. Britton, "Still Pretty Prudent: Post-Cold War American Public Opinion on the Use of Military Force," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42 (1998): 395-417.
 42. Lee Sigelman, et al., "As Time Goes By: Daily Opinion Change During the Persian Gulf War," *Political Communication* 10 (1993): 363.
 43. Personal telephone interview with David Demarest.
 44. Personal telephone interview with David Demarest.

45. See Edward C. Luck, *Mixed Messages: American Politics and International Organization, 1919-1999*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999).
Luck's work primarily traces the relationship between the United States and the United Nations, noting the increasing animus of American politicians toward the international body, which risk undermining the ability of the U.N. to accomplish its often modest international policy agenda.
46. G. John Ikenberry, "Multilateralism and U.S. Grand Strategy," from *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Sheppard Foreman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 131-132. Although founded in 1949, the establishment of NATO represented the institutionalization of a series of European-U.S. multilateral initiatives begun in the wake of World War II.
47. JoAnn Fagot Aviel, "The Evolution of Multilateral Diplomacy," in *Multilateral Diplomacy and the United Nations Today*, eds. James P. Muldoon Jr., JoAnn Fagot Aviel, Richard Reitano, and Earl Sullivan (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 14.
48. For a defense of that perspective, see Jesse Helms, "Saving the U.N.," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (1996): 2-7.
49. Mark Peffley, Ronald G. Langley, and Robert Kirby Goidel, "Public Responses to the Presidential Use of Force: A Panel Analysis," *Political Behavior* 17(1995): 307-337.
50. Personal telephone interview with Mark W. Davis.

51. Stewart Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents: The Causes and Consequences of U.S. Ambivalence," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2002), 7.
52. Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 7.
53. Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 7.
54. Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus*, 96 (1967): 5.
55. Rhys H. Williams and Susan M. Alexander, "Religious Rhetoric in American Populism: Civil Religion as Movement Ideology," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 33 (1994): 4.
56. Thomas Langston, "A Rumor of Sovereignty: The People, Their Presidents, and Civil Religion in the Age of Jackson," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 23(1993): 669.
57. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Perrenial Books, 1988), 35.
58. Ernest G. Bormann, *The Force of Fantasy: Restoring the American Dream* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001), 44.
59. Ronald F. Reid, "Apocalypticism and Typology: Rhetorical Dimensions of a Symbolic Reality," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 234.
60. Reid, "Apocalypticism and Typology: Rhetorical Dimensions of a Symbolic Reality," 234.

61. From Findley's *History of the Insurrections, in the Four Western Counties of Pennsylvania*, 1796. Quoted by Michael Kammen in "The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," *American Quarterly* 45 (1993): 3.
62. From Jefferson's "Letter to Mme. La Duchesse d'Auville, April 2, 1790," in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, Volume 5*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1892-99) quoted in Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, "Thomas Jefferson and American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 69 (1990), 148.
63. John M. Murris, "The Jeffersonian Triumph and American Exceptionalism," *Journal of the Early Republic* 20 (Spring 2000): 1-25.
64. Quoted in Murris, "The Jeffersonian Triumph and American Exceptionalism," 2-3.
65. Mary Stuckey, *Defining Americans: The Presidency and National Identity*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 357.
66. Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1995), 93.
67. Quoted in Michael Kazin, "The Right's Unsung Prophet," *The Nation*, February 20, 1989, 242.
68. See Reginald Horseman, *Race and Manifest Destiny* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).
69. Lyon Rathbun, "The Debate over Annexing Texas and the Emergence of Manifest Destiny," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 4 (2001): 488.
70. Quoted in Howard Jones, *Crucible of Power: A History of American Foreign Relations from 1897* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc, 2001), 2.

71. Jones, *Crucible of Power*, 28-52.
72. See Richard White, "Frederick Jackson Turner and the Frontier Myth," *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994); Jones, *Crucible of Power*, 2.
73. Donald K. Pickens, "Westward Expansion and the End of American Exceptionalism," *Western Historical Quarterly* 12 (1981): 411.
74. Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1994), 45-49.
75. Woodrow Wilson, "An Annual Message on the State of the Union, [December 7, 1915]," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Volume 35, October 1, 1915-January 27, 1916*, ed. Arthur Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 297.
76. "An Annual Message on the State of the Union, [December 7, 1915]," in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Volume 35, October 1, 1915-January 27, 1916*, 297.
77. Wilson quoted in Anthony Gaughan, "Woodrow Wilson and the Legacy of the Civil War," *Civil War Historian*, 43(1997): 240.
78. Robert W. Tucker, "The Triumph of Wilsonianism?" *World Policy Journal* 12 (1993): 85-89. Although Tucker published his analysis in 1993, Jason C. Flanagan found that George W. Bush could also be "painted with a Wilsonian Brush." See "Woodrow Wilson's 'Rhetorical Restructuring:' The Transformation of the American Self and the Construction of the German Enemy," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 7 (2004): 115.
79. Robert Kraig, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost World of the Oratorical Statesman*. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 9.

80. James R. Andrews, "Presidential Leadership and National Identity: Woodrow Wilson and the Meaning of America," in *The Presidency and Rhetorical Leadership*, ed. Leroy G. Dorsey, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 141.
81. Flanagan, "Woodrow Wilson's 'Rhetorical Restructuring,'" 137-138.
82. Wander argued that prophetic dualism was a product of American experience during World War I and World War II and first fell into rhetorical vogue during the Eisenhower administration. See Flanagan, "Woodrow Wilson's 'Rhetorical Restructuring,'" 138-139, and Wander, "The Rhetoric of American Foreign Policy," in *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy Metaphor and Ideology*, eds. Martin J. Medhurst, Robert L. Ivie, Philip Wander, and Robert L. Scott, (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press), 157-163.
83. John F. Wilson, "Rhetorical Echoes of a Wilsonian Idea," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 43 (1957): 277.
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89. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 1.
90. Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 39.
91. "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," *International Organization* 38 (1984), 90.
92. Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," 290.
93. Gilpin, "The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism," 291.
94. Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Knopf, 1985), 10.
95. Robert T. Kraig, "The Tragic Science: The Uses of Jimmy Carter in Foreign Policy Realism," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5 (2002): 1-30, and Beer and Hariman, "Realism and Rhetoric in International Relations," in *Post-Realism*, 6.
96. Kraig, "The Tragic Science," 5.
97. Thomas Kane, "Foreign Policy Suppositions and Commanding Ideas," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 28 (1991): 151.
98. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*; Bucklin, *Realism and American Foreign Policy*.
99. James Arnt Aune, "Reinhold Niebuhur and the Rhetoric of Christian Realism," in *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations*, eds. Francis A

- Beer and Robert Hariman (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1996), 77.
100. Aune, "Reinhold Niebhr and the Rhetoric of Christian Realism," in *Post-Realism*, 77.
101. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 34.
102. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 35.
103. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 29.
104. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 29.
105. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 29.
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107. Charles Hantz, "Reagan at the Brandenburg Gate: Moral Clarity Tempered by Pragmatism," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9 (2006): 21-50.
108. Reprinted in Jeanne Kirkpatrick, *The Reagan Phenomenon, and Other Speeches on Foreign Policy*, (Washington, DC: The American Enterprise Institute, 1983), 81.
109. Phyllis Bennis, *Calling the Shots: How Washington Dominates Today's U.N.* (New York: Olive Branch Press, 1996), 18-19.
110. Personal telephone interview with David Demarest.
111. George N. Dionisopoulos and Stephen R. Goldzwig, "'The Meaning of Vietnam': Political Rhetoric as Revisionist Cultural History," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (1992): 63.
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115. "Why We Are in the Gulf," *Newsweek*, November 26, 1990, 28.
116. From the Office of Speech Writing, Series 1: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 65, "VFW National Convention 8/20/90" [OA5376][2], George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
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CHAPTER III

THE UNITED NATIONS AS THE MEANS TO AN END:

MULTILATERAL ACTION, REALISM, AND HISTORY IN BUSH'S GULF

WAR RHETORIC

Iraq's invasion marks an outrageous breach of the peace, a broad-faced violation of the United Nations Charter. And by its actions, the Iraqi regime has shown its contempt for the very principles on which the United Nations was founded.

President George Herbert Walker Bush
"Remarks to Officers and Troops at Hickam Air Force Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii"
October 28, 1990

Few institutions have drawn the ire of realists more than the United Nations. Realist scholar John H. Herz described contemporary realism as a reaction to the postwar idealism embodied in the U.N. and its efforts "to lead mankind to permanent peace."¹ Although Hans Morgenthau alleged that the U.N. could contribute to international diplomacy, he believed that it left the great powers to defer to smaller member states. Such an action might allow those great powers to shift the responsibility for particular policy choices to the U.N., but it also left the U.S. captive to international consensus.² George Kennan said that faith in enterprises like the U.N. imperiled Western security in favor of "misplaced idealism."³

Realists feared what they perceived as the organization's utopian idealism and its commitment to principles that did not always respect the existing balance of international power. Multilateral commitments constrained unilateral action, which realists viewed as necessary in a world where other states competed for power, and where reactionary and revolutionary violence threatened to destabilize existing structures of state power.

According to Ekaterina Stepanova of Moscow's Center for International Security,

American realists embraced unilateral military power instead of multilateralism as “necessary for the compelling demonstration of U.S. strategic independence and global leadership.”⁴

However, the realist focus on the ends of policy rather than the means allowed realists to recognize the role that the United Nations could play in serving those ends. Morgenthau, for instance, held that the United States could approach the U.N. in a “pragmatic spirit” to align anti-communist states in the U.N. General Assembly and to generate support for Western policy.⁵ Even then, Morgenthau argued that policymakers could not rely upon the U.N for much more than that, arguments echoed in the Reagan administration’s often-adversarial stance toward the organization.

Bush’s use of the United Nations in his Gulf War rhetoric recognized a similar pragmatic function in the U.N. By acting multilaterally, a state actor can attain a variety of benefits, including legitimacy for a variety of policy actions. In this case, I will argue that the Bush administration employed three multilaterally oriented rhetorical strategies to justify U.S. action in the Gulf War. First, although the United States unilaterally controlled most of the military component of the 1990-1991 Gulf War, the administration consistently emphasized the multilateral component of U.S. policy in the region, even when that component was principally diplomatic. Second, Bush temporally situated the credibility of the United Nations in a new age in global relations, where that organization no longer faced the political constraints that bound it during the Cold War. Instead, the organization had the opportunity to fulfill the uncorrupted promise of the post-World War II period. Third, Bush enhanced that aforementioned credibility by rhetorically imbuing the U.N. with an American ethos, and subordinating the U.N. role in Iraq to

U.S. control. In other instances, he employed U.N. ethos to legitimize U.S. policy. In doing so, the U.N. inherited the credibility of the U.S. as established in American foreign policy rhetoric, while reciprocally, U.S. action gained the legitimacy of U.N approval. Before I address these concerns in greater depth, I will elaborate on the nature of U.S. multilateralism before the 1991 Persian Gulf War, and I will clarify the realist opposition to international action before explaining how Bush uses the rhetoric of American exceptionalism to overcome this opposition.

The United States and Multilateralism

For policymakers and scholars, the term *multilateralism* describes a variety of multi-state arrangements. Political scientist John G. Ruggie called it a “generic institutional form in international relations” that “coordinates behavior among three or more states on the basis of generalized principles of conduct.”⁶ Students of international affairs have long recognized the benefits of acting multilaterally. Edward Luck identified three principal benefits of multilateralism. First, it promoted burden sharing so that states divvied the costs and risks of action rather than burdening any single state. Second, it enabled states to expand their force projection capabilities, as they could use the military and geographic resources available in allied states. Third, in an argument that Luck attributes primarily to the United States, the cooperation resulting from multilateralism provided political leaders with evidence of higher principles in the conduct of foreign affairs, which he claims have long appealed to the public and legislators when presidents have sought support for military action.⁷ The higher principles that Luck describes bear less in common with the quasi-religious connotations of American Exceptionalism than with the notion of principle arising from a quasi-democratic international consensus. The

popularity of such an appeal should come as little surprise as democracy is a critical part of America's civil religious vocabulary.

The United States has not always readily embraced multilateral engagement, a tendency revealed in America's more isolationist origins. Stewart Patrick traced the American tendency to "go it alone" to the nation's early geographic isolation and particularly to George Washington's own admonition in his farewell address to "steer clear of permanent alliances with any part of the foreign world."⁸ Washington's admonition would receive further support from Thomas Jefferson, whose first inaugural address warned against "entangling alliances." Perhaps the most eloquent statement on the issue came from John Quincy Adams, who cautioned against such alliances by suggesting that the U.S might become "the dictatress of the world," tainted by alliances with states less devoted to liberty.⁹

Patrick argues that such admonitions led to a nineteenth century foreign policy guided by an unrestrained unilateralism. In the early 20th century, by virtue of its continued geographic isolation and its status as a great power, the U.S. opted to engage in an active foreign policy having evolved from a "promised land" into "a crusader state."¹⁰ Such efforts would reach their apex with the presidency of Woodrow Wilson.

Wilsonian Rhetoric, Realism, and the United Nations

By the beginning of the 20th century, the United States had attained the status of a major global power, a status ultimately embodied in the Wilsonian ethos of the crusader state, although diplomatic historian Frank Ninkovich alleged that war fatigue would ultimately lead to a minor revision of these ideals.¹¹ The revision of which Ninkovich spoke came in the form of a multilateral institution that could overcome the difficulties

faced by Wilson's League of Nations. Ninkovich claimed that during World War II, Wilsonianism "became the ideological legitimator for a United Nations that was very different in conception from the League."¹²

For all of the talk of Wilson's influence, it is surprising that his most significant policy failure as President concerned an organization with which the realists have so firmly associated him. It is useful in this case to identify two streams of thought regarding the League's failure that reveal much about the relationship between realism and American exceptionalism, and which I will label the *functional* and the *rhetorical*.

Functional explanations for the League's failure were neatly summarized by foreign policy historian Lloyd E. Ambrosius who cited "pluralism and interdependence" as the League's fundamental dilemma for the United States. On the one hand, the diversity of world opinion prevented the U.S. from using the League as a simple legitimating vehicle for Wilson's political foreign policy agenda. On the other, the increasing interdependence among nations facilitated by the League's existence threatened to make the U.S. a more active participant in the international arena than Americans might have desired. This was particularly significant for Wilson, as the U.S. still had a considerable isolationist element within its polity. Patrick provided a more thorough explanation for the U.S. position, arguing that the debate was less strictly about isolationism versus multilateralism than it was about the issues underlying broader American participation in multilateral efforts, like "U.S. constitutional traditions, national sovereignty and freedom of action."¹³

Rhetorical explanations for the failure of the League tended to focus on Wilson's inability to engage in successful public argument in favor of the League. Political

scientist Amos Perlmutter, for example, has argued that public persuasion is a critical component of successful policymaking and cites “Wilson’s failure to explain the importance of the League of Nations to the Senate” as an argument in favor of that proposition.¹⁴ Rhetorical critic Leroy Dorsey offered a more nuanced explanation of Wilson’s failure, which students of Wilson could neatly summarize as Wilson’s own failure to appear Wilsonian. Specifically, Dorsey indicated that Wilson’s failure to engage in transcendent rhetoric linking “American and world prosperity to evidence of God’s will” and his inability to distinguish between public argument and private deliberation with Congress undermined his dream of the League.¹⁵ Robert Kraig’s position on Wilson’s failure offered an interesting contrast to Dorsey’s in that it was Wilson’s high minded and non-negotiable idealism in an organization that morally transcended the differences among states that rendered him incapable of compromising with his political adversaries over the League’s future role.¹⁶ Rhetorical scholar J. Michael Hogan provided further insight in his own recent work on Wilson’s League of Nations rhetoric, arguing that Wilson’s failure to compromise made him increasingly reliant on demagoguery, ultimately subverting the possibility of public deliberation on the issue.¹⁷

In that the focus of this study concerned the rhetorical implications of foreign policy rhetoric, Wilson’s rhetorical failure in advocating the League of Nations is particularly significant. It is one of the most prominent events in the history of foreign policy rhetoric, as Wilson, the embodiment of the ethos of American exceptionalism, demonstrated the clear rhetorical significance of a moral orientation in foreign policy. While a realist might be more apt to embrace Ambrosius’ functional explanation for

Wilson's failure, it is practical to assume that both explanations have some merit:

Wilson failed because the League failed to function as Wilson intended and because Wilson failed to persuade the public about the need for that organization's function.

While the U.S. led post-World War II reconstruction, Presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry S Truman also succeeded in developing a foreign policy framework to address the emerging world order in ways Wilson had never considered. Where Wilson failed in his efforts to promote and maintain the League of Nations, Roosevelt and Truman succeeded not only in establishing a permanent international body that empowered the war's victors and facilitated the rebuilding effort, but also in gaining the assent of the American people for such an effort. Patrick explains the rationale for this post-World War II commitment to multilateralism:

The legitimacy benefits of multilateralism are partly a function of one's timeframe. If the United States fears that acting alone will set a dangerous precedent or generate resistance down the road, it may be wiser to accept modest multilateral constraints on maneuvering room or sovereign prerogatives today in order to "lock in" a set of rules that will continue to serve its interests even after its current dominance fades.¹⁸

As Morgenthau suggested, the efficacy of multilateral institutions in coalition building explained why Americans remained committed to them. Patrick argued that this coalition-building function was the basis of the bipartisan support that multilateral institutions received during the Cold War period: American policymakers recognized multilateral institutions as effective venues for uniting forces opposed to communism. But that participation soon became limited to forums where U.S. unilateral political interests might be better matched with like-minded allies in organizations like the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, where

states could “collaborate on common purposes, express national preferences, and obtain satisfaction.”¹⁹

Such a proclivity toward the pursuit of multilateral alliances with like-minded states also pointed to growing frustration with the larger-scale multilateralism of the United Nations. During the Reagan administration, this frustration manifested itself in political hostility to international treaties and, most notably, toward U.N.E.S.C.O., the U.N. Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Increased membership in the United Nations exacerbated this challenge as participating states used the organization as a venue publicly challenging U.S. values and interests.

In this case, just as Wilson failed to use American exceptionalism in advocating the League of Nations, American exceptionalism became a basis for the rejection of multilateral participation. Rather than embracing such criticism from within the U.N., many Americans became more prone simply to reject that institution, as it no longer reflected the core national interests and values of the U.S.²⁰

Given the benefits that the United States could incur through multilateral action, Bush had to address a public that was skeptical, to at least some degree, with regard to the United Nations as an actor in American affairs. While actual measures of public support indicated that the public generally admired the institution, American foreign policy elites, particularly those who would identify themselves as realists, were more skeptical, and some maintained considerable political constituencies.²¹ Perhaps as significant was the connection between political realists and the Bush administration. Scowcroft was a student of Morgenthau, while Bush’s own considerable experiences, including his service as representative to the United Nations and to the People’s Republic

of China (PRC) during the Nixon administration's initial tilt toward the PRC, also marked him as a member of that foreign policy elite.

Bush also had to distinguish the United Nations, the actor and venue through which his administration would conduct much of the diplomacy surrounding the Gulf War, from the organization that realists had so thoroughly debased in their doctrines. As a realist, Bush would have believed that rendering such a distinction was critical. In order to accomplish this task he had to distinguish the U.N. in contemporary practice from the U.N depicted by realists.

In this case, the Bush administration employed three rhetorical strategies to justify U.S. action. First, the administration consistently emphasized the multilateral component of U.S. policy in the region, even when that component was principally diplomatic. Second, Bush situated the credibility of the United Nations in the post-Cold War era. Third, Bush enhanced that aforementioned credibility by rhetorically imbuing the U.N. with an American ethos in some cases, and subordinating the U.S. role in Iraq to U.N. legitimacy.

Bush's Multilateralist Rhetoric and the United Nations

Defining U.S. Action as Multilateral

In terms of the first multilaterally oriented strategy employed to justify U.S. action, Bush sought to identify clearly U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf as multilateral in nature. Policymakers and scholars could not categorize U.S. policy against Iraq during the Gulf War as strictly multilateral or solely unilateral in nature. Stepanova, for instance, described military operations during the 1991 Gulf War as unilateral military action demonstrating U.S. domination of the international scene after the decline of the

Soviet Union.²² Whether the forcible removal of Iraqi forces actually constituted solely multilateral action or unilateral action legitimized by multilateral diplomatic consensus confuses the point. Officials in the Bush administration, however, often indicated that U.S. policy during the first Gulf War was multilateral.

For example, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft specifically indicated that the U.S. “should not go it alone, that a multilateral approach was better.”²³ Bush and Scowcroft have since both acknowledged that they opposed a military effort directed by the U.N., claiming that although international consensus was critical to efforts in the Gulf, it was “even more important to keep the strings of control tightly in our hands.”²⁴

If administration officials had offered a more thorough description of such an approach, they might have publicly noted that only some constituents of that policy were strictly multilateral. Bush, for example, only explicitly referred to military action against Iraq as multilateral on two occasions. These references occurred during exchanges with the press rather than during prepared addresses. On August 11, in an exchange with reporters on the Gulf War, the President indicated, in reference to a question regarding Egyptian troop involvement in Kuwait that “this would be a multilateral force and it would be a multilateral force with some Arab components.”²⁵ Bush’s later comment on August 20 referred to the demands made by Saddam Hussein that “these multilateral forces and U.S. forces . . . get out and return to the status of Saddam Hussein’s having invaded Kuwait.”²⁶

Any other references to multilateral military action were absent from the public record, which tended to emphasize other components of the policy that were clearly multilateral. In other similar appearances and statements, the president referenced

“multilateral diplomacy”²⁷ and “multilateral resolution,”²⁸ but never directly stated that the U.S. policy in the Gulf was solely multilateral. In these descriptions, multilateralism described the policies short of military action, generally referring to the proceedings in the U.N. Security Council and consultation with other states regarding Iraqi aggression against Iraq. Speechwriter Mark Davis indicated that the President’s multilateral rhetorical vision quite intentionally emphasized the diplomatic component of the U.N.:

What we really meant, and the vision that the President had, was a multilateralist vision, of a kind of roundtable of democratic states joined together for their own interest and also for the common interest. A family of nations that shared certain values, but were different in many respects.²⁹

In the broadest sense characterized by Ruggie’s definition, U.S. policy in the Gulf embodied a multilateral policy, even if military action was principally unilateral. Bush and Scowcroft’s use of “multilateral” in relation to that policy was even more important as it represented an explicit public acknowledgment of a multilateral component in their Persian Gulf policy. It also provided further acknowledgement that this component of the policy was intended to provide legitimacy to U.S. actions.

These arguments clearly seemed at work in U.S. Gulf policy, shaping material and symbolic policy considerations. For example, Bush believed the burden-sharing function of the multilateral approach would serve as one of the most persuasive arguments in defense of military action. As he specifically noted in a typed personal memo to Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Cicconi:

Where we talk of Iraq etc
we should nmake [sic] point-always-that
we are not alone...
that burden is being shared

that Japan and Germany arev [sic]
supporting.³⁰

In another case, in remarks at a White House briefing for the leaders of veteran's organizations, the final draft quoted former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill:

Churchill said, it was truly Britain's finest hour. Such courage inspired America and, indeed, the world, which rallied to the cause of freedom and defeated the dark forces which threatened to engulf us all.³¹

Early drafts of the speech had featured a different Churchill quote: "Never in the field of human conflict, was so much owed by so many to so few." The draft was changed after a memo noted that the original quote was "inappropriate because it highlights the actions of a few rather than the many."³² The quote that was actually employed emphasized the role of "the world," even if Churchill was initially emphasizing the roles played by Britain and the world in bringing the defeat of Axis forces in World War II.

The Administration likely saw attention to the role of coalition allies as critical because the U.S. relied on other regional states, principally Saudi Arabia, as staging grounds for action against Iraq.³³ Their concern for maintaining that access and support resulted in a curtailment of their strategic unilateral goals in the region, limiting action against Iraq to the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.³⁴ Finally, and of greatest concern in this case, acting multilaterally provided legitimacy to the forceful expulsion of Iraqi forces.

Given this emerging political tendency, the circumstances under which the administration might embrace such a framework seemed limited. However, the end of the Cold War might have provided such a circumstance, as Bush could historically situate the animus directed against the organization within the context of the Cold War era itself. Speechwriter Dan McGroarty noted that through his Gulf War rhetoric, Bush "may have meant, in some respects, to issue a kind of corrective, but perhaps a mild one against

Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and even Ronald Reagan, for whom he had enormous respect and reverence.”³⁵

The strength of such a corrective may have been borne of Bush’s own association with the United Nations. Director of Communications David Demarest indicated that Bush’s diplomatic experience made the U.N. an invaluable rhetorical asset:

In the Gulf, his network around international associates and colleagues was extraordinary. He was on a first name basis with one head of state after another, mainly because of his years in the CIA, as Vice President, U.N. Ambassador himself. He had a lot of respect for the U.N. He had assets there that were very, very valuable.³⁶

There is also reason to believe that the Bush administration recognized the unique benefit of the United Nations as a multilateral institution. In a memorandum to the President dated September 28, 1990, speechwriter Edward E. McNally emphasizes the significance of Bush’s upcoming October 1, 1990 address before the U.N. General Assembly.

McNally refers to the address as both “our last” and “our best” opportunity to “say that the cold war is over.”³⁷ The “last” reference concerned Germany’s pending reunification on October 3. McNally’s “best” reference indicated, “it’s before not only ‘a’ world forum, but the world forum,”³⁸ and further emphasized the significance of that fact in light of the U.S. request that the U.N. “play a key part in reintegrating the Soviet Union into the community of nations.”³⁹

Fulfilling the Promise of the United Nations

In terms of the second multilaterally oriented strategy employed to justify U.S. action, Bush had to convince some of his audience that the U.N. was up to the task of serving U.S. interests in the Gulf. He had to do so in light of prior U.S. criticisms of that organization. For those already convinced of the organization’s ethos, the U.S. pursuit of

multilateral cooperation created greater legitimacy for U.S. policy by contrasting its efforts with those of its military foe.

Scholars have identified a longstanding tradition in the rhetoric of war wherein rhetors metaphorically depict their enemies as savages who are immune to civilized forms of conduct. Rhetors depict themselves and their own interests as representative of higher ideals in order to provide the most distinct dialectical contrast between themselves and these savages. When politicians employ rhetoric to justify military action as a corrective to such savagery, they must assure the audience that they have employed all civilized non-violent means at their disposal, and have concluded that force is the last available option for dealing with the enemy. Presidents have historically referred to the rule of law and norms of international conduct, both antithetical to savage impulses, as principles to guide their own behavior and that of other states, including their enemies.⁴⁰

In his August 8 address to the nation concerning the initial deployment of forces to the Gulf, Bush described the U. N. sanctions against Iraq as “now enshrined in international law,” implying that they had a binding force.⁴¹ This argument simplified longstanding disagreement among the members of the U.N. Security Council concerning the nature of their authority. Although the modern U.N. did not suffer from the same legitimacy crises that doomed the League of Nations, difficulty in attaining international consensus was inevitably complicated.

Bush overcame this complication by strategically employing arguments related to the U.N.’s role in the emerging post-Cold War environment. He compared the United Nations of the early 1990s with the organization as it initially emerged in the aftermath of World War II. This argument first emerged in an address to a joint session of Congress

on both the situation in the Gulf and on efforts to control the federal budget deficit. Bush reminded his audience, “We’re now in sight of a United Nations that performs as envisioned by its founders.”⁴² This was in implicit contrast to the United Nations of the Cold War era, which east-west division had rendered impotent.⁴³ Convincing Congress was critical to the success of the overall mission, and the attention drawn by this address would only succeed in defining the situation for the public in ways favorable to the administration.

Bush reinforced this argument by stating, “The United Nations is backing up its words with action,” a less-than-subtle reference to prior criticisms of the organization. The action to which he referred was the passage of five Security Council resolutions condemning the invasion of Kuwait. This U.N. would no longer be associated with the failed multilateral institution depicted by conservatives, as the Gulf War reinvigorated its role. Because opponents of the U.N. believed that the organization had grown impotent in the Cold War era, Bush had to depict the U.N. as an agent capable of living up to its long-established doctrines governing international conduct. In an address to a gathering of veterans’ organizations, the president clarified the broader role of the United Nations. After referencing the Battle of Britain as a rallying point for Allied action during World War II, Bush went on to speak of “allied strength” and suggested that the U.S. and its allies now vested such strength in the U.N. Security Council whose eight major Gulf related resolutions were “setting the terms for solving the crisis.” He further clarified that the conflict in the Gulf represented “not Iraq versus the United States; it’s Iraq against the entire world,” an appeal based in the international rule of law. As opponents of multilateralism often presumed that international law regimes were largely idealist

enterprises serving as little more than unenforceable codes of behavior, Bush clarified this with regard to Iraq's aggression against Kuwait:

By waging a war of aggression, plundering a peaceful neighbor, and holding these innocents hostage, Iraq has violated every standard of international behavior. And we're not talking about international etiquette here; we're talking about international law. And outlaw nations and outlaw leaders simply have got to understand that.⁴⁴

Bush's most extended use of this argument occurred during an address before the United Nations General Assembly on October 1, 1990. The speech was his first opportunity to address the world body on issues related to the emerging crisis in the Gulf. While he might have directed that speech toward that body to create an international consensus favoring the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait, the administration was certainly aware of the public implications of that address. In his speech, the President offered a historical recounting of the United Nations' origins: "The founding of the United Nations embodied our deepest hopes for a peaceful world, and during the past year, we've come closer than ever before to realizing those hopes."⁴⁵ By speech's end, he reaffirmed his belief that the organization was "now fulfilling its promise as the world's parliament of peace."⁴⁶ A similar argument emerged in the 1991 State of the Union address, albeit in a different form that addressed a central realist concern.

Bush's references to the U.N. in the post-World War II era drew attention to the unrealized potential of that organization. In the State of the Union address, he referenced the leadership of the U.N. as "once only a hoped-for ideal" now realized. He strengthened this reference in an earlier portion of the speech that presumably dealt with domestic policy. In it, he described the exceptional qualities of Americans, stating, "We are a nation of rock-solid realism and clear-eyed idealism. We are Americans. We are

the Nation that believes in the future. We are the Nation that can shape the future.”⁴⁷ In Bush’s narrative, the U.N role in the Persian Gulf made it a mutual product of world idealism tempered with the realism that was only a product of U.S. leadership.

Just as the initial promise of the U.N was glimpsed after World War II, Bush situated the eventual failure of that promise to the Cold War itself. While the realists argued that it might serve a utilitarian function in garnering support for global anti-communism, by the Cold War’s end, the United Nations’ broad membership rendered it less susceptible to U.S. influence.

Bush offered the Cold War itself as the rationale for the U.N.’s lack of efficacy. He identified the East-West divide as the source of the organization’s impotence. In doing so, he never laid the blame for this divide on the United States or the Soviet Union. Instead, he referred to a new condition of international consensus, indicating that the mutual U.S.-Soviet condemnation of Iraqi aggression marked an end to that divide. The first of these references occurred during the address to the joint session of Congress on September 11, 1990, as he pointed to a recent meeting with Gorbachev in Helsinki to trumpet the shared opposition of the U.S. and Russia to the occupation of Kuwait. “Clearly,” he argued, “no longer can a dictator count on East-West confrontation to stymie concerted United Nations action against aggression. A new partnership of nations has begun.”⁴⁸ In his address before the U.N. General Assembly, Bush indicated that when the Soviet Union “agreed with so many of us here” in condemning Iraqi aggression that “we had, indeed, put four decades of history behind us.”⁴⁹ These statements simplified a more complicated political reality in that the former Soviet Union and the

United States had very different ideas about how to address that occupation, a difference that would pose some problems for the eventual execution of military action against Iraq.

Bush went further in addressing the impact of the Cold War's end in his address to the U.N. General Assembly. Bush embraced the historical-descriptive and metaphorical dimensions of the Cold War when he referred to the chilling impact of the Cold War on the U.N., past, present, and future:

We are hopeful that the machinery of the United Nations will no longer be frozen by the divisions that plagued us during the Cold War, that at last—long last—we can build new bridges and tear down old walls, that at long last we will be able to build a new world based on an event for which we have all hoped: an end to the Cold War.⁵⁰

In this case, the Cold War described not only an era in international foreign relations, but also the policies contained therein. The Cold War would not freeze the machinery of the U.N. Barriers between states, both real, in the case of the Berlin Wall, and ideological, would give way to a new world. As a byproduct of this foreign policy epoch, Bush argued that the Cold War's end offered new, transcendent opportunities for the world:

We have a vision of a new partnership of nations that transcends the Cold War: a partnership based on consultation, cooperation, and collective action, especially through international and regional organizations; a partnership united by principle and the rule of law and supported by an equitable sharing of both cost and commitment; a partnership whose goals are to increase democracy, increase prosperity, increase the peace, and reduce arms.⁵¹

Although his immediate audience for this address consisted of members of the international community, he clearly kept his own larger audience in mind. Such a consideration was paramount given the attention the media focused on the U.N. address. It was also critical in that he reestablished the significance of the United Nations as a deliberative body.

The role that the U.N. did play may seem less significant in substance, but is central as a secondary legitimizing force. Bush frequently cited U.N. action as legitimizing U.S. concerns in the Persian Gulf. In his August 8, 1990, address announcing the deployment of troops to the Persian Gulf, Bush noted that the U.N. “approved for the first time in 23 years mandatory sanctions under chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.”⁵² In his September 11, 1990, address to Congress, he noted, “We can now point to five United Nations Security Council resolutions that condemn Iraq's aggression.”⁵³ By the announcement of military action in his address of January 16, 1991, he justified that action as having been “taken in accord with United Nations resolutions and with the consent of the United States Congress.”⁵⁴ The U.N. now occupied the same legitimizing agency as the Congress.

The nature of that promise was often qualified to ensure that the United States role in that world remained limited. One manner in which this occurred was by expanding responsibility for U.S. success in the region. “No one country can claim this victory as its own,” Bush said after the suspension of allied combat operations, a claim followed shortly thereafter by references to “victory for the United Nations, for all mankind, for the rule of law, and for what is right.”⁵⁵ In referencing the future course of U.S. policy in the Middle East after the Gulf War, Bush suggests that peace between Israelis and Palestinians “must be grounded in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.”⁵⁶ The same address indicated that regional tensions will find “no solely American answer.”⁵⁷ In each case, the assurance of limited U.S. action premised in U.N. rules suggested that Americans need not be concerned about the

overextension of American capacity, as it is principally exercised in the limited interest of the U.N.

The president employed the aforementioned argument concerning the revitalization of the U.N. in the post-Cold War era in order to reestablish the ethos of the United Nations as an actor, albeit a limited one. Doing so was critical to the success of U.S. military policy in the region and to broader U.S. foreign policy goals after the war. Much of the president's arguments in favor of the war involved references to the rule of law. Absent the United Nations Charter, the United States had no statutory basis to demonstrate that the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait violated international law. While some observers noted the longstanding convention against inter-Arab military conflict, that would not suffice as the sole justification for American action, as even other Arab states, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, were hesitant to support U.S. military action. Such regional hesitation would do little to allay the potential concerns of Americans who feared that their politicians might place American armed forces unnecessarily into harm's way.

Reciprocating Ethos Between The U. S. and the U. N.

Bush's rhetorical assertions of U.N. ethos attempted to restore authority to the perception of the United Nations as an agent, but he did not likely intend to afford the U.N. with any authority independent of the U.S. In his third rhetorical strategy, Bush portrayed the U.N. as a subordinate of U.S. policy in justifying its role in the Gulf. In others he described the United States as subordinate to the legitimate authority of the United Nations, particularly in those instances which would seem to expand the U.S. foreign policy obligation beyond the removal of Iraq from Kuwait.

In justifying action in the Gulf, Bush left little room for interpretation: the U.S. role in the Gulf was one of leadership. Bush argued in the September 11, 1990, address, “Recent events have surely proven that there is no substitute for American leadership. In the face of tyranny, let no one doubt American credibility and reliability.”⁵⁸ In the State of the Union Address, the president rendered the American exceptional imperative of leadership a central component of his justification for military action in the Persian Gulf: “We are Americans, part of something larger than ourselves. For two centuries, we’ve done the hard work of freedom. And tonight, we lead the world in facing down a threat to decency and humanity.”⁵⁹

That “something larger than ourselves” referred not to the multilateral effort to condemn and prevent aggression. Instead, it served as a reminder of the hierarchal distinction between the U.S. and the U.N. If this reminder was too vague, Bush further clarified it when referring to the unique ability of the United States to direct the coalition:

Yes, the United States bears a major share of leadership in this effort. Among the nations of the world, only the United States of America has both the moral standing and the means to back it up. We’re the only nation on this Earth that could assemble the forces of peace.⁶⁰

Because the U.S. represented a more significant moral and historical force than the U.N., the legitimacy of that organization, representing the collective will of its member states, could not trump the U.S. representing the divine will of history as its agent for freedom on Earth.

An earlier draft of Bush’s address to the U.N. General Assembly dated September 26, 1990, revealed a more prominent emphasis on the U.S. role at the end of the Cold War. In this draft, Bush was to have likened his address to Lincoln’s Gettysburg address, implicitly analogizing the Cold War’s end to the end of the American Civil War. Initially

situated amidst the reference to the end of “The long twilight struggle that for 45 years has divided Europe,” the speech indicated that the members of the General Assembly were meeting “as Lincoln said of Gettysburg, on a field of battle” but then clarifying that it had actually be “a battlefield of ideas.”⁶¹ In this analogy then, the United Nations was Gettysburg, which suggested that Bush was Lincoln, the U.S. was the Union and the Soviets the defeated Confederate States of America. Although the speech then argued that as at Gettysburg, “it is time to bury the past and move on to a time of healing,”⁶² the final draft abandoned all references to the Civil War. This removal should come as little surprise, given its suggestion that the Soviet Union was a vanquished foe and the U.S. the Cold War’s decisive albeit humble victor. Demarest has noted that such concerns also had a distinct foreign policy dimension, as there existed some trepidation within the administration about the consequences of proclaiming triumph over the Soviets:

He didn’t want to make life harder for Gorbachev and, subsequently, Yeltsin by chest-thumping “We won, we won” because that would give ammunition to the hardliners in the Kremlin, who were not happy about Perestroika and Glasnost and all of that stuff, looking for an opportunity to say to all of the Gorbachevs of the world, “Look, the Americans are claiming victory, you’ve ruined us.” They would have looked for those sort of opportunities to destabilize Gorbachev.⁶³

Another benefit of restoring the U.N.’s legitimacy lay in the more ambiguous intent of U.S. foreign policy. Just as the post-Cold War era provided foreign policy makers with the ability to reshape a new international consensus, the shape of that new world remained ambiguous. The only certainty in Bush’s rhetoric was that the new world would be one that opposed the use of aggression. In the early stages of the U.S. reaction to the invasion of Kuwait, Bush identified the crisis in the Persian Gulf as the first great opportunity “to move toward an historic period of cooperation.”⁶⁴

The benefits of such a period of cooperation carried the significant promise of a better world, a “new era —freer from the threat of terror, stronger in the pursuit of justice, and more secure in the quest for peace.”⁶⁵ By the war’s end, the president’s description of the war’s aftermath explicitly fulfilled this promise. As he noted in his address announcing the cessation of major military activity in the region, “Tonight, we meet in a world blessed by the promise of peace.”⁶⁶

Bush restored the credibility and legitimizing force of multilateralism by indicating that the United Nations of late 1990 and early 1991 was an organization that had the ability to live up to the promise of its inception, an ability made possible by the cessation of the Cold War. In doing so, Bush rhetorically shaped the U.N. into a force that could not only provide legitimacy for U.S. action, but that could also shape the future direction of international cooperation, creating a new era of peace. The United Nations, however, remained rhetorically subordinated to the U.S., as American exceptionalism rendered Americans better capable of leading the new and emerging world order. Bush treated the consensus demonstrated by the multilateral components of the U.S. policy as but one component of the legitimizing force behind U.S. military action. The U.S. used the U.N. to legitimize its foreign policy efforts, but prior to doing so, it had to reestablish that organization’s legitimacy by using arguments that situated that credibility in the new world emerging from the Cold War’s end.

Notes

1. John H. Herz, "Political Realism Revisited: A Response," *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (1981): 201.
2. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Peace and Power* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1985), 516-517.
3. Quoted in H.W. Brands, *What America Owes the World: The Struggle for the Soul of Foreign Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 148.
4. Ekaterina Stepanova, "The Unilateral and Multilateral Use of Force by the United States," in *Unilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: International Perspectives*, eds. David M. Malone and Yuen Foong Khong, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 183-184.
5. Hans Morgenthau, *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 274. Morgenthau specifically argued that the General Assembly was better suited to U.S. policy interests than the U.N. Security Council, as the distribution of Security Council veto power to China and the Soviet Union rendered that diplomatic venue an ineffective tool for containing the spread of communism.
6. John G. Ruggie, "Multilateralism: The Anatomy of an Institution" in *Multilateralism Matters: The Theory and Praxis of an Institutional Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 10-11.
7. Edward Luck, *Mixed Messages: American Politics and International Organizations, 1919-1999* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 15-33.

8. Stewart Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents: The Causes and Consequences of U.S. Ambivalence," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2002), 8.
9. "Address of July 4, 1821," in *John Quincy Adams and the American Continental Empire*, ed. Walter LaFeber (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), 45.
10. Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 8. He specifically cites historian Walter MacDougall's *Promised Land, Crusader State: America's Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).
11. Frank Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).
12. Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, 77.
13. Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 8. See also Robert A. Kraig, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost World of the Oratorical Statesman* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 161-178, and Lloyd E. Ambrosius, *Woodrow Wilson and the American Diplomatic Tradition: The Treaty Fight in Perspective*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 290-291.
14. Amos Perlmutter, *Making the World Safe for Democracy: Wilsonianism and its Totalitarian Challengers* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 35.

15. Leroy Dorsey, "Woodrow Wilson's Fight for the League of Nations: A Reexamination," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2 (1999), 129-131.
16. Kraig, *Woodrow Wilson*, 180-185.
17. J. Michael Hogan, *Woodrow Wilson's Western Tour: Rhetoric, Public Opinion, and the League of Nations* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006).
18. Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 10.
19. Patrick, "Multilateralism and its Discontents," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 9.
20. Luck, *Mixed Messages*, 54.
21. See Norman Podherotz, "A Statement on the Persian Gulf Crisis," *Commentary* November 1990, 90.
22. Stepanova, "The Unilateral and Multilateral Use of Force by the United States," in *Unilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 183-190.
23. George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1998), 491.
24. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 491.
25. "Remarks and an Exchange with Reporters on the Persian Gulf Crisis, August 11, 1990," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1125.

26. "Exchange with Reporters Aboard Air Force One, August 20, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1151. There is a third implicit suggestion that the force opposed to Iraqi aggression is multilateral in a question and answer session, after "Remarks on Signing a Resolution Providing Funding for Continued Government Operation and a Question-and-Answer Session with Reporters in New York, New York, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1336. In this case, Bush answers a reporter who asks whether the president will pursue a U.N. resolution against Iraq "stating that the U.N. multilateral force is authorized to go in and do combat with Iraq?" The president offers no correction, initially answering, "We have not been pressing for that at this point."
27. See "The President's News Conference on the Persian Gulf Conflict, March 1, 1991"), 205 and "The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada in Ottawa, March 13, 1991," 258, in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992).
28. "Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq, February 11, 1991, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 133.

29. Personal telephone interview with Mark W. Davis, January 24, 2007.
30. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 67, Folder-Colorado GOP Fundraiser 9/18/90 [OA 5376][2], George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX. See Ruth Wedgewood, "Unilateral Action in a Multilateral World," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2002), 182. Wedgewood, of the Council on Foreign Relations, noted that the total burden-sharing contribution from Germany, Japan, and the Gulf States totaled \$52 billion.
31. "Remarks at a White House Briefing for Representatives of Veterans Organizations, October 11, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1400.
32. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 71, Folder-Meetings of Veterans Leaders 10/11/90 [OA 6026] Document: "White House Staffing Memorandum, Date: 10/10/90, Subject: Presidential Remarks: Meeting of Veterans Leaders, James Cicconi and David Demarest Comments, Memorandum for the President, Through: Chriss Winston, From: Edward E. McNally, Subject: Address to the U.N. General Assembly, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
33. The administration premised the first phase of military action, Operation Desert Shield, on a defense of Saudi Arabia against possible Iraqi aggression.

When Operation Desert Storm commenced, U.S. and coalition military forces conducted operations from Saudi Arabia.

34. Political scientist David M. Snow, among others, noted that the occupation or invasion of any part of Iraq would have caused the immediate dissolution of the Arab component of the Gulf War coalition. See “The Shifting Threat: Sources and Consequences of Change,” in *The Adaptive Military: Armed Forces in a Turbulent World*, ed. James S. Burk (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 123.
35. Personal telephone interview with Daniel McGroarty on November 14, 2006.
36. Personal telephone interview with David Demarest on January 16, 2007.
37. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 69, Folder-United Nations General Assembly Address 10/1/90 [OA 5377][1], Document: “September 28, 1990, Memorandum for the President, Through: Chriss Winston, From: Edward E. McNally, Subject: Address to the U.N. General Assembly, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX. McNally specifically stated that “the cold war is over” was “a predictable ‘headline’ likely to resonate clear on into 1992.”
38. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 69, Folder-United Nations General Assembly Address 10/1/90 [OA 5377][1], Document: “September 28, 1990, Memorandum for the President, Through: Chriss Winston, From: Edward E. McNally, Subject: Address to the U.N. General Assembly.

39. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 69, Folder-United Nations General Assembly Address 10/1/90 [OA 5377][1], Document: "September 28, 1990, Memorandum for the President, Through: Chriss Winston, From: Edward E. McNally, Subject: Address to the U.N. General Assembly.
40. See Robert L. Ivie, "Images of Savagery in American Justifications for War," *Communication Monographs* 47 (1980): 279-294; John M. Murphy and Mary E. Stuckey, "Rhetorical Colonialism in North America," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 25 (2001): 73-98; and Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier 1600-1860* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).
41. "Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, August 8, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1108.
42. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1220.
43. Steven J. Bucklin, *Realism and American Foreign Policy: Wilsonians and the Kennan-Morgenthau Thesis*, (Westport, CT: Prager Publishers), 111-112.

44. "Remarks at a White House Briefing for Representatives of Veterans Organizations, October 11, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1125.
45. "Address Before the 45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York, October 1, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1330.
46. "Address Before the 45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York, October 1, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1334.
47. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 75.
48. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1219.
49. "Address Before the 45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York, October 1, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1331.
50. "Address Before the 45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York, October 1, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1331.

51. "Address Before the 45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York, October 1, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1332.
52. "Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, August 8, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1108. The prior sanctions to which the president referred were levied against South Africa and Rhodesia. Rhodesia would eventually become Zimbabwe.
53. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1220.
54. "Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf, January 16, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 43.
55. "Address to the Nation on the Suspension of Allied Offensive Combat Operations in the Persian Gulf, February 27, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 187.
56. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict, March 6, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United*

- States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 220.
57. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict, March 6, 1991,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 220.
58. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1219.
59. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 74.
60. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, 74.
61. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 69, Folder-United Nations General Assembly Address 10/1/90 [OA 5377][1], Document: National Security Council Executive Secretariat Staffing Document, System Log Number 7689, Prepare Memo: Scowcroft to Chriss Winston, McNally/Simon, September 26, 1990 Draft Four (B:U.N.), Presidential Remarks: United Nations General Assembly, New York City, Monday, October 1, 1990, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.

62. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 69, Folder-United Nations General Assembly Address 10/1/90 [OA 5377][1], Document: National Security Council Executive Secretariat Staffing Document, System Log Number 7689, Prepare Memo: Scowcroft to Chriss Winston, McNally/Simon, September 26, 1990 Draft Four (B:U.N.), Presidential Remarks: United Nations General Assembly, New York City, Monday, October 1, 1990.
63. Personal telephone interview with David Demarest.
64. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1219.
65. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit, September 11, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, 1219.
66. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict, March 6, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, 219.

CHAPTER IV

THE VIRTUE OF “DOABILITY”:

CONTRASTING THE FIRST PERSIAN GULF WAR WITH VIETNAM

Question: Let me just ask you: You talk about you don’t want this to be another Vietnam.

The President: It won’t be another Vietnam.

President George Walker Bush
“Exchange with Reporters on the Persian Gulf Crisis”
January 9, 1991

Political scientist and rhetorical critic Mary Stuckey argued that President Lyndon Johnson’s handling of the Vietnam War demonstrated the significance of public argument in relation to foreign policy. “If a president cannot make a convincing argument for a desired course of action,” she opined, “then it is certainly possible that the course of action is not all that desirable.”¹ In 1968, a young first-term Congressman representing a district in Houston, Texas expressed a similar sentiment. Although George H.W. Bush supported the war effort, in a speech text dated January 11, 1968, one day after having completed a 10-day tour of Vietnam, he argued, “the administration has not sold this war to the people.”²

When President Richard Nixon withdrew American troops from Vietnam in 1973, the United States found itself in an unfamiliar position. The war had gone disastrously as the U.S. devoted \$141 billion to a war that saw over 58,000 U.S. forces killed in action, an injury exacerbated by the fall of Saigon to North Vietnam in 1975.³ While defining the exact terms for victory in that conflict would prove difficult, a historical consensus has emerged regarding the Vietnam War as a failure for the United States.⁴

Given the injury that the Vietnam War did to American exceptionalism, and the disdain that realists held for the conduct of that war, I will examine how Bush used his Gulf War rhetoric to overcome lingering memories of the Vietnam War. Specifically, I will argue that Bush overcame the memory of the Vietnam War using four rhetorical strategies, the first three employed before and during the war, and the fourth one employed after the war. First, Bush emphasized the abilities of the current military force. By implicit comparison, he suggested that the military facing Iraqi aggression was not the same military associated with America's failure in Vietnam. Second, Bush suggested that forces in the Gulf were not politically constrained in the same fashion as their Vietnam counterparts. He bolstered this argument by rhetorically constructing a public that endorsed military action and that understood the consequences of a lack of support. Third, Bush framed all these arguments during the war with references to the limited scope of the conflict. Bush portrayed the conflict as a product of longstanding American principles, while simultaneously emphasizing the modest strategic goals and minimal risk incurred by U.S. involvement. Before addressing this strategic contrast in greater depth, I will explain the influence of the war in Vietnam on American political thought and rhetoric. In doing so, I will clarify the realist opposition to that conflict before expounding upon Bush's contrast of the Vietnam War to the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Bush used this contrast to address the realist concern about the dangers of unqualified military commitments while satisfying the audience's need for appeals to American exceptionalism in the justification of U.S. foreign policy endeavors.

The United States and the Rhetoric of the Vietnam War

Rhetorical critics have noted the rhetorical difficulties faced by presidents in addressing the Vietnam War. Rhetorical critic John M. Murphy, for example, argued that Johnson's insistent reliance upon the rhetorical conventions used by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy in defending his own military execution of the war in Vietnam undermined Johnson's credibility, portraying him as "a president who could not act alone or think through the problems that faced him."⁵ Robert L. Ivie argued that Johnson trapped himself with his own rhetoric of containment. In this rhetoric, the war was now part of the larger drama of the Cold War where the U.S. could give no ground to the forces of global communism. Ivie posited that Johnson should have instead emphasized nation building in South Vietnam.⁶ Although Nixon fared better politically than Johnson as he not only succeeded him but also went on to earn reelection in 1972, Nixon's rhetoric still proved divisive and ethically perilous.⁷

The pervasive nature of American exceptionalism exacerbated that difficulty, influencing the manner in which the public responded to the war. Historian Loren Baritz argued that the persistent cultural belief in American exceptionalism rendered Americans initially blind to the possibility of difficulties in Vietnam. As he argued, "Our National myth showed us we were good, our technology made us strong, and our bureaucracy gave us standard operating procedure. It was not a winning combination."⁸ Seymour Martin Lipset, of the Hoover Institution also found American exceptionalism culpable for American difficulties in Vietnam, in this case because the war, characterized as a "battle of good versus evil" rendered "unconditional surrender" of the enemy the only anticipated outcome.⁹

Determining the goal of any specific American military action cannot be a simple task as different rationales guided different policymakers' decisions. The presence of multiple policymakers responsible for any single policy enhances this problem in democratic politics. Although the war in Vietnam was the product of multiple presidential administrations with varying rationales,¹⁰ the most discernable and consistent rationale was the one offered publicly: the Vietnam war was an effort to prevent communism from taking hold in Asia, an effort that political scientist John Mueller called the product of a "near consensus."¹¹ While other goals might have existed, the foreign policy elite believed that success in Vietnam was essential to continued public support for U.S. foreign policy effort.¹²

As rhetorical scholar Cori E. Dauber argued, the most significant lesson that American policymakers learned from Vietnam was that "the United States cannot successfully go to war without the full support of the American people."¹³ Among the assumptions underlying this lesson was the belief that support for the Vietnam War eroded with increasing casualty rates, a claim that Dauber alleged to be suspect at best.¹⁴ While Nixon might have intended his policy of Vietnamization, the transfer of military responsibility from U.S. forces to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, to relieve the U.S. of responsibility for the stability and security of the South,¹⁵ American exceptionalism still sustained a profound injury with the fall of Saigon in 1975.

The most significant consequence of the war for U.S. policymakers was an increased risk aversion and casualty aversion,¹⁶ hardly the qualities of the triumphant quasi-divine state portrayed in the rhetoric of American exceptionalism. The Iranian hostage crisis following the 1979 capture of the U.S. embassy in Tehran further reminded

the U.S. policymakers and the public of the fragility of America's global position. The press and public had construed this event as a national humiliation for President Jimmy Carter. A *Time* magazine cover story noted the growing perception that Carter was "inept," while Joseph Kraft of the *Washington Post* called Carter "unfit to be President at a time of crisis."¹⁷ It rather decisively contributed to Ronald Reagan's crushing defeat of Carter in 1980.¹⁸

Reagan rhetorically restored American pride and offered a rhetorical alternative to the narrative of America's defeat in Vietnam that once again embraced American exceptionalism. Historian Robert J. McMahon noted that Reagan celebrated Vietnam as a noble cause and praised Vietnam veterans as heroic figures who were "undefeated in battle."¹⁹ Reagan went so far as to defy the conventional wisdom that the United States suffered a defeat in Vietnam, arguing, "We didn't lose that war. We won virtually every engagement."²⁰ In contrast to the soldiers, Reagan solidly blamed policymakers and the media for the alleged defeat of American military forces in Southeast Asia.

The effectiveness of explicit Vietnam centered-arguments was, however, highly suspect. During the 1980 presidential election campaign, when then candidate Reagan declared, "it's time we recognized that ours was, in truth, a noble cause,"²¹ the consequences of that pronouncement were costly. Although he subsequently became president, Reagan's pollster and chief political strategist Richard Wirthlin said that the "noble cause" speech "hurt Reagan with the voters more than any other mistake."²²

Reagan paid a minor political price for his revisionist perspective on the war, but in doing so learned a lesson about the cultural understanding of Vietnam. His administration was not ignorant of the significance of Vietnam in the minds of

Americans. Reagan's policies, in fact, demonstrated a significant appreciation for the lessons learned in Vietnam. Aside use of military force in the liberation of Grenada, the Reagan administration embraced a doctrine of war by proxy wherein the U.S. provided support for revolutionary groups opposing communist governments. The use of the Reagan doctrine enabled the White House to avoid direct military confrontation with forces that they publicly portrayed as Soviet proxies.²³ More significant was the introduction of the Weinberger Doctrine.

In an address entitled "The Uses of Military Power" in 1984, Caspar W. Weinberger, Reagan's Secretary of Defense, argued that the United States faced six considerations that policymakers must take into account before committing to the use of force in any given situation. Those considerations are summarized as follows: 1) Combat forces should not be committed to combat unless their action serves a vital national interest; 2) Combat forces should only be committed with the clear intention of winning; 3) Combat forces should only be committed with clear political and military objectives; 4) The size of combat forces and mission objectives should be continually assessed and adjusted as necessary; 5) Combat forces should not be deployed without public and Congressional support; and 6) Combat forces should only be deployed as a last resort.²⁴

George P. Schultz, Secretary of State under Reagan, took notable exception to the doctrine. As noted by rhetorical scholars George N. Dionisopoulos and Stephen R. Goldzwig, Shultz implicitly challenged the Weinburger Doctrine in a speech entitled "The Meaning of Vietnam." In that speech, Shultz challenged the assumption that the lesson drawn from Vietnam should be to emphasize caution in the use of force.²⁵ Shultz

highlighted the traditions of American exceptionalism inherent even in Vietnam, arguing that Americans “fought for what Americans have always fought for: freedom, human dignity, and justice.”²⁶ Shultz’s address, however, came at a time when the press was more interested in the controversy surrounding Reagan’s visit to the Bitburg cemetery than to a reconsideration of America’s war in Vietnam.²⁷

Although Dionisopoulos and Goldzwig argue that Shultz’s address was part of the larger body of revisionist perspective on Vietnam, what they identify as the orthodox perspective came to dominate deliberations over the use of force. The Weinberger doctrine has more recently been associated with General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Bush administration. Powell had formerly served as a military aide to Weinberger and likely played a significant role in constructing Weinberger’s famous address.²⁸

Weinberger’s initial presentation of the doctrine in speech form was significant in that the doctrine also served as the public basis for argument in favor of military action. Rather than restricting the actual policies adopted by policymakers, it provided a rhetorical roadmap for policymakers seeking to justify the application of military force in the post-Vietnam era. For example, the first consideration indicates that policymakers should only deploy combat forces in service of a vital national interest, a presumption that suggests there is an objectively perceived vital national interest.²⁹

Given the significance of American exceptionalism in the justification of foreign policy action, politicians and the public could interpret vital interests broadly, so long as they were justified in moral terms. Brent Scowcroft, Bush’s National Security Advisor, and close protégé of realist Hans Morgenthau, was well aware of the Weinberger

Doctrine, which he recognized as a response to Vietnam and the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut. He referred to the doctrine's reliance of public support as "amounting to a national crusade."³⁰ Separating such a crusade from the historical exigencies that spawned it would have proven impossible. Bush, however, rhetorically employed those exigencies in service of that crusade, if only to differentiate the past from the present.

Bush, Vietnam and the Gulf War

That Americans would historically compare the Gulf War to the war in Vietnam was, however, inescapable. One media story that sought the opinion of experts anticipated a U.S. victory while cautioning that the U.S. "could suffer the most battlefield casualties since Vietnam."³¹ *The New York Times* referred to Bush's commitment of forces as the "broadest and most hazardous overseas military venture since the Vietnam War."³² A Gallup poll released on August 5, 1990 found 46% of its respondents believed it likely that "U.S. involvement in Saudi Arabia could turn into another Vietnam."³³ A study by the Gannett Media Center found the word *Vietnam* appeared no fewer than 7,299 times in news stories about the Gulf War between August 1, 1990, and February 28, 1991.³⁴

Given his earlier expressed concerns about the Vietnam war, it was unsurprising to find that the comparison between the Persian Gulf crisis and Vietnam weighed on Bush's mind. As he noted in a *World Transformed*, "I did not want to repeat the problems of the Vietnam War."³⁵ Members of the administration, including his speechwriters, shared this concern. In a memorandum to then chief of staff John Sununu from Roger B. Porter concerning the 1991 State of the Union address, dated December 30, 1990, Porter indicates that the speech marks "an opportunity to convey a tone of

‘prudent decisiveness’” as the “Vietnam experience is still a vivid memory in the minds of most adult Americans.”³⁶ Among the specific problems associated with this experience are memories of “the loss of life, the unsatisfying resolution, and the lack of decisiveness in concluding the conflict.”³⁷ In another memorandum from Executive Assistant to Chief of Staff Ed Rogers to Deputy Communications Director Chriss Winston, Rogers commented on an early draft of the president’s remarks to the U.S. Reserve Officers Association dated on January 21, 1991. In these comments, Rogers noted the lack of gravity in the speech, specifically indicating that U.S. action in the Gulf “puts to rest the Post-Vietnam theory that dictated doing nothing rather than something when faced with hostility.”³⁸

Members of the president’s national security staff were more hesitant to draw on those parallels. Shortly after the initiation of Operation Desert Shield, President Bush spoke at a fundraiser for Mike Hayden, the incumbent governor of Kansas. Among Hayden’s credentials was his personal military service in Vietnam, a fact that Bush’s speechwriters used to transition Bush’s campaign speech into a relatively lengthy public defense of Desert Shield. However, Brent Scowcroft and Robert Gates made several comments in annotated revisions suggesting that Bush not make parallels between the situation in the Gulf and Vietnam. In a passage to read “As a former platoon leader and company commander in Vietnam, nobody knows this better than Mike Hayden: America will not be intimidated,” an annotation from Scowcroft reads “Avoid Vietnam parallel.”³⁹

Similarly, when the speech suggested that what would occur in the Gulf is similar to “what we did from Corregidor to Hamburger Hill,” Scowcroft notes that “Hamburger Hill provoked public outrage over what appeared a senseless loss of life—find another

example.”⁴⁰ A note in the opposite margin from Gates read, “Why use an example where we lost (however heroically).”⁴¹

This was a concern common among the realists, who reviled the war in Vietnam. Hans Morgenthau argued that the war in Vietnam was a moral crusade rather than a prudential exercise of power in the national interest.⁴² Fellow realist Kennan argued that the war in Vietnam drained critical resources away from areas like Eastern Europe that were more strategically essential to U.S. interests.⁴³

While the realists based their assessment as to the nation’s failure in Vietnam on conjecture, it framed the larger concern that Bush faced regarding elite perception of the public’s aversion to casualties. That was not, however, the only concern regarding the public memory of Vietnam. Another lasting cultural remnant concerned the Vietnam veteran. In March 1968, U.S. troops under the command of Lt. William Calley killed over 200 civilians in the village of My Lai, an event for which the military subsequently tried and convicted Calley to life imprisonment.⁴⁴ Journalist Phillip Knightley argued that the revelation of the My Lai massacre in 1969, coming on the heels of the images of intense combat from the Tet offensive a year earlier, shocked the nation, which had previously not believed that American soldiers might engage in such conduct.⁴⁵ Historian Eric T. Dean, Jr., claimed that after My Lai war critics could depict the Vietnam veteran as a “corrupted, tarnished and ruined innocent,” an image that fit into their larger anti-war agenda.⁴⁶ Dean claimed that the incident in My Lai was historically contiguous with a wave of national unemployment that coincided with the release of 1 million soldiers from service and the occurrence of and media attention to a heroin epidemic among troops both remaining in service and returning home.⁴⁷ This contributed

to the image of the Vietnam veteran as scorned and forgotten, prompting media stories that called them “the most alienated generation of trained killers in American history.”⁴⁸

President George H.W. Bush’s early references to Vietnam demonstrated the continuing resonance of that theme in American memory. As a candidate in 1988, in written response to a question concerning lessons learned from Vietnam, Bush indicated, “Our participation was right, albeit poorly conducted.”⁴⁹ Bush struck a different tone in his Inaugural Address, as he argued

That war cleaves us still. However, friends, that war began in earnest a quarter of a century ago, and surely the statute of limitation has been reached. This is a fact: The final lesson of Vietnam is that no great nation can long afford to be sundered by a memory.⁵⁰

Bush had to cope with what he believed to be the impact of that memory in order to address the public’s concerns regarding the crisis in the Persian Gulf. Based on his statement during the Vietnam War at the beginning of this chapter, he may have believed that the manner in which he addressed that issue could facilitate the success of military action. Bush, the realist, had to balance the perceived expectations of realist doctrine in light of “failure” in Vietnam, with the expectation that foreign policy remained motivated by the exceptional nature of America. In this case, I argue that Bush employed an implicit contrast between the Persian Gulf crisis and the war in Vietnam.

Bush employed the public memory of Vietnam to justify the U.S. military response to Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait. The contrast between the war in Vietnam and the crisis in the Gulf reinforced the fact that the Gulf war was not the same aimless, unfocused moral crusade that realists described in Vietnam. Instead, he described a more focused conflict with achievable ends. He did so through the employment of three rhetorical strategies.

First, he suggested that the troops in the Gulf were better prepared for the rigors of war than were their brethren in Vietnam. Second, he implicitly argued that troops serving in the Gulf were not constrained by an unsupportive public. He bolstered this argument by constructing a public that supported the war and that was well aware of the consequences of a failure to support those forces. Finally, he emphasized the limited scope of this conflict, while simultaneously indicating that the war served longstanding American principles and values.

Comparing Vietnam and the Gulf War Before and During the War

Contrasting the Troops

Bush's first major strategy involved the implied contrast between American forces stationed in Iraq and those that had served in Vietnam. Bush argued that current U.S. troops embodied ideal American qualities. He made recurring references to the morale of the troops, a morale buoyed by their overall level of competence and their character. Bush did not argue that these qualities were absent in forces during Vietnam, but he did strongly imply that the current forces represented the finest American military forces ever assembled, suggesting that they would fare better than any prior force. These qualities also balanced both realist and American exceptional arguments. The troops served the realist doctrine of prudence with their competence, while their character restored confidence in American exceptionalism. In his September 11, 1990, address to Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the federal budget deficit, Bush first made the case that the American troops stationed in a distant land represented the best America had to offer, and he collectively referred to their overall sense of morale, competence and character as manifested in their dedication:

At this moment, our brave servicemen and women stand watch in that distant desert and on distant seas, side by side with the forces of more than 20 other nations. They are some of the finest men and women of the United States of America. And they're doing one terrific job. These valiant Americans were ready at a moment's notice to leave their spouses and their children, to serve on the front line halfway around the world. They remind us who keeps America strong: they do. In the trying circumstances of the Gulf, the morale of our service men and women is excellent. In the face of danger, they're brave, they're well-trained, and dedicated.⁵¹

In addition to his statements regarding the qualities possessed by the troops themselves, Bush's use of spatial references solidified the troop differentiation. Bush's use of spatial references, that "distant desert" and "distant sea" evoked images of a strange and foreign place different from Vietnam, a "desert" with troops that were "brave," "well-trained," and "dedicated" versus their generational predecessors who faced defeat nearly two decades before.

By his radio address of January 5, 1991, Bush made that comparison more apparent. As he noted:

I remember this all too well, and have no greater concern than the well-being of our men and women stationed in the Persian Gulf. True, their morale is sky-high. True, if they are called upon to fight the aggressors, they will do their job courageously, professionally and, in the end, decisively. There will be no more Vietnams.⁵²

The troops possessed an intermingling of qualities such that no single quality dominated another. They are "courageous," a quality tempered by their professionalism and their ability to act "decisively." Any one of these components in isolation might pose a danger. A courageous soldier might enter into combat recklessly. A professional soldier is competent and task-oriented. A soldier who acts decisively will attain the desired end of victory.

In his January 16, 1991 address announcing allied military action against Iraq, the president implicitly emphasized this distinction between Vietnam era troops and those serving in the Gulf. As Bush argued, troops serving as part of an all-volunteer force were uniquely exceptional, “the Nation’s finest . . . an all-volunteer force, magnificently trained, highly motivated.”⁵³ By referring to the non-conscripted nature of forces in the Gulf, the president implied that volunteering suggests a greater commitment, one magnified by his references to their trainings and motivation.

One of the more apparent distinctions between the Gulf War and Vietnam lay in the nature of the forces used. The military had to conscript combat troops for service in Vietnam, a luxury no longer available to American presidents. Some have attributed the large-scale opposition to the war to conscription,⁵⁴ so the abandonment of that policy in the United States should come as little surprise. It also provided post-Vietnam rhetors with the unique ability to cite the level of commitment in a volunteer versus a questionably committed draftee. Bush further emphasized this distinction by citing the direct commitment expressed by the troops themselves. He cited anecdotes from forces stationed in the region emphasizing the significance of their roles, with emphatic statements like “Let’s free these people, so we can go home and be free again,” “There are things worth fighting for” and “It’s better to deal with this guy now than 5 years from now.”⁵⁵

This comparison was not accidental. In a memorandum dated January 22, 1991, from Roger B. Porter, Assistant to the President for Economic and Domestic Policy to Chriss Winston concerning the Bush speech before the U.S. Reserve Officer’s Association, Porter noted among his suggestions that the “contrast with Vietnam is a

good one, and one that resonates with the American people.”⁵⁶ But Porter took exception to the portrayal of Vietnam in the negative, such that the draft would have the president say that among the lessons of Vietnam “never again will our fighting men and women be sent in to do a job with one hand tied behind their back,” rather than favoring an implicit positive statement indicating “this time our fighting men and women are being sent into battle armed with what is needed and able to use those weapons to accomplish their mission.”⁵⁷

Upon announcing the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, Bush attributed that withdrawal to the “magnificent heroic performance of our armed forces.”⁵⁸ In an address on the following day concerning the suspension of allied offensive combat operations, Bush noted that “We have treated your POWs with kindness,”⁵⁹ a reflection on the humanity of the troops suggesting that such behavior was exceptional rather than any norm of combat behavior. The troops embodied the qualities of truly exceptional Americans. Bush specifically reflected on the treatment of Iraqi prisoners to demonstrate the humanity of American combat troops. He once more relied on the anecdotal word of a soldier himself:

And then there was an American soldier. Remember what he said? He said: “It’s okay. You’re all right now. You’re all right now.” That scene says a lot about America, a lot about who we are. Americans are a caring people. We are a good people, a generous people. Let us always be caring and good and generous in all we do.⁶⁰

The troops embodied ideal American qualities, allowing Americans to celebrate their victory without fear that the troops have resorted to the darker qualities earlier anti-war advocates had associated with American forces in Vietnam.

Bush continued to depict the forces as possessed of noble qualities of character, arguing that the forces demonstrated those qualities that were best in Americans. “The America we saw in Desert Storm was first-class talent,” he said. “...And we saw soldiers who know about honor and bravery and duty and country and the world-shaking power of these simple words.”⁶¹

The U.S. forces serving in and soon to return from the Persian Gulf were not the alienated, unemployed drug abusers that historian Dean alleged to exist in the American vision of the Vietnam veteran. Instead, they represented the ideal conception of the soldier both in the rhetoric of American exceptionalism, as they knew about the “world shaking power” of words like “honor,” “bravery,” “duty,” and “country,” and in the realist sense, as they were “first-class talent” tasked with “state of the art technology.” Bush, the president so often criticized for his inattention to domestic policy, projected in the troops his own prescription for that which ailed America.

Supporting Our Troops

Bush’s second major strategy involved the public’s support for the war. Bush suggested that military forces stationed in the Gulf were not constrained by an unsupportive public. This concern owed more to fears based on the American experience in Vietnam than it was any measure of actual public support for the war. For example, Bush indicated that in August of 1990 even James Baker, his Secretary of State and long-time friend, worried “that we could get bogged down in another Vietnam, lose public support, and see the Bush presidency destroyed.”⁶² This was at a time when the President was enjoying then-record approval ratings.⁶³ Bush’s staff was also wary of public support. In the aforementioned memo from Roger B. Porter, he offered a second

suggestion in the final draft. While the original copy read “never again will they be sent in to do a job without the full backing of the folks back home,”⁶⁴ Porter suggested instead “they are going into battle with the full backing of the folks back home,” and “the support is not just military, it’s moral...measured in the support of our servicemen and women from every one of us at home.”⁶⁵

Upon the announcement of allied military action against the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, Bush offered the most explicit comparison between the requirements of forces in the Gulf versus their predecessors in Vietnam.

I’ve told the American people before that this will not be another Vietnam, and I repeat this here tonight. Our troops will have the best possible support in the entire world, and they will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back. I’m hopeful that this fighting will not go on for long and that casualties will be held to an absolute minimum.⁶⁶

The suggestion that forces had their hands tied behind their backs had been a consistent argument rendered by Vietnam War revisionists: *But for the lack of political support, the military would have won.*⁶⁷ Bush coupled this argument with an allusion to the public’s perceived casualty aversion. The current public would offer the “best possible support,” unlike the public during Vietnam.⁶⁸ Bush also reassured the public that it need not worry about the president himself failing to support the troops.

In his March 6, 1991 address, Bush did not simply endorse the military’s effort; he also indicated that the simple act of recognizing and appreciating the efforts of U.S. forces stationed in the Gulf constituted a noble and heroic action. Bush first noted the significance of such recognition in his 1991 State of the Union address. As he said of the troops, “Our commitment to them must be equal to their commitment to their country. They are truly America’s finest.”⁶⁹ In his March 6, 1991, address to a joint session of

Congress on the end of the war, Bush noted, “There is something noble and majestic about the pride, about the patriotism that we feel tonight.”⁷⁰

The president extended this argument to post-war pronouncements as to the meaning of the conflict itself. In remarks made on the National Days of Thanksgiving, Bush indicated that the support shown to U.S. forces has made the country stronger than it was before:

We give thanks for the remarkable unity of our people throughout the conflict and especially for the strong support shown for our troops in the field. I am confident that our nation will emerge stronger and more united to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.⁷¹

Again, while Bush never directly addressed Vietnam, the inference was that the nation would now be “stronger” and “more united,” an interesting suggestion for a public that had consistently supported the war effort.

Limited Commitment, Longstanding Principles

The third argument employed by the President involved a pragmatic perspective on the principles guiding the United States in Iraq. Bush attributed the U.S. presence in the Gulf to longstanding U.S. principles, but modified this claim by reference to the limited scope of the U.S. commitment. By associating these principles with longstanding traditions of American exceptionalism, Bush successfully negotiated the fear of casualties associated with the war in Vietnam.

In his August 8, 1990, address announcing the deployment of U.S. forces to Saudi Arabia, Bush made the first announcement of four principles that he claimed would guide U.S. policy in the region: 1) “the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces;” 2) restoration of “Kuwait’s legitimate government;” 3) “the security and

stability of the Persian Gulf;” and 4) protection of “the lives of American citizens abroad.”⁷²

Bush repeated this recitation of principles in several addresses including his August 29, 1991, address to forces stationed in the Gulf, his September 11, 1990, address to a joint session of Congress, his January 15, 1991, address announcing the commencement of allied military action in the Gulf, and his January 29, 1991, State of the Union address. While rather explicit, Bush’s reference to this list as principles guiding policy reconfigured his audience’s assumptions regarding the meaning of principle. What Bush labeled as principles seemed more accurately labeled as goals. In choosing such a label, the president configured “principles” as something that could be achieved through the accomplishment of U.S. policy. Arguments founded in the need to protect a specific geographic region without references to a broader ideological conflict address the central audiences concern with military intervention in the wake of Vietnam. U.S. action, in this strategy, is principled and practical.

Bush’s rhetorical conception of “principles” did not function in isolation. As Morgenthau argued, the association of the Viet Cong with global communism rendered the Vietnam War part of a broader moral crusade during the Cold war, making it more difficult for the United States to disentangle itself from that war. To overcome the public’s association of military intervention with failed ideological crusades, Bush looked to longer-standing models of public discourse. Bush analogized Iraq to Germany, circa World War II. Although previous rhetorical analysis has drawn attention to these parallels, the focus has differed. Kathleen M. German noted Bush’s use of directive language to overcome the collective memory of Vietnam was such that the mission in the

Gulf harkened to a divinely inspired action.⁷³ Stuckey noted that Bush relied upon the Munich analogy to bolster his own claims for the immediate cessation of aggression lest that aggression spiral into other regional violence directed at Saudi Arabia.⁷⁴ Kathleen German also found connections between the rhetoric used to justify the Gulf War and the rhetoric of World War II.⁷⁵ This echoed the work of the Army War College's Jeffrey Record. Record offered an explanation for the dominance of such analogies, arguing that in public discourse about military action two dominant analogies have emerged. In order to justify military action, policymakers analogize the potential failure to act to the allied failure to prevent Hitler's expansion beyond Munich. The failure to immediately confront and oppose Nazi aggression, from this perspective, made the Second World War inevitable, a mistake that the U.S. should never repeat.⁷⁶

Bush owed his use of that rationale to its effective contrast with the equally enduring rhetorical legacy of the American war in Vietnam. That purpose, in fact, seemed such an apparent part of Bush's rhetoric that the nature of that implicit contrast is an argument unto itself. Bush used the World War II analogies not because they were successful in their own right but because they tempered the more recent American memories of the war in Vietnam. Although German suggested this success could be owed to the sense of divine mission, in the realist sense, such pronouncements alone would not suffice. Comparisons to the Germans and even other less civilized, albeit vaguely defined forces now armed with modern weaponry, suggested that even the horrors of the past were now a greater threat than ever, surely representing a realist threat to the existing balance of power.

By explicitly contrasting the military effort in the Persian Gulf to World War II, Bush drew attention away from the Vietnam analogy. Bush began using such a comparison on August 8 upon announcing troop deployments to the region:

Facing negligible resistance from its much smaller neighbor, Iraq's tanks stormed in blitzkrieg fashion through Kuwait in a few short hours. With more than 100,000 troops, along with tanks, artillery, and surface-to-surface missiles, Iraq now occupies Kuwait. This aggression came just hours after Saddam Hussein specifically assured numerous countries in the area that there would be no invasion. There is no justification whatsoever for this outrageous and brutal act of aggression.⁷⁷

Bush's references to Iraq suggested that the invasion of Kuwait was the product of another, darker time, out of sync with the world emerging from the Cold War. Whether this time was the early 20th century up to World War II or even some time before that was irrelevant as any of those periods served the argument. Just as Bush contrasted the forces in the Gulf with their counterparts in Vietnam, here he is further contrasting the situation such that analogies to Vietnam are even less appropriate as the situation is more analogous to wars that had greater public support.

What was more important was that this was a far more easily understood threat than the complicated enemy of Vietnam. Iraq, the savage, sovereign state marked a return to traditional forms of intrastate opposition:

Iraq's unprovoked aggression is a throwback to another era, a dark relic from a dark time. It has plundered Kuwait. It has terrorized innocent civilians. It has held even diplomats hostage. Iraq and its leaders must be held liable for these crimes of abuse and destruction.⁷⁸

More apparently, Bush constructed Iraq as a preeminent threat, such that its uncivilized military coupled with the tools of modern warfare made it a significant threat.

But we must recognize that Iraq may not stop using force to advance its ambitions. Iraq has massed an enormous war machine on the Saudi border capable of initiating hostilities with little or no additional preparation.⁷⁹

Earlier drafts of this speech went further in the use of the World War II analogy, more specifically in drawing on images of the Nuremberg Trials. The final draft noted that Bush's address occurred on the "anniversary of the convictions at Nuremberg," indicating that the lessons of that era included names "for these barbarous acts: "War Crimes;" "Crimes Against Peace;" and "Crimes Against Humanity." When the President was to draw attention to United Nations support for the punishment of war crimes, he would claim that:

The bottom line is this: Heads of state can be held responsible for crimes against world law are liable to punishment. The stakes are high, the cause is just—and here at the U.N.—the authority is real.⁸⁰

An annotated note from Brent Scowcroft crossed out the aforementioned statement with a notation inquiring "Do we really want to highlight this now?"⁸¹ The Reagan administrations prior had engaged in past efforts to delegitimize the findings of the U.N.'s International Court of Justice, as it had ruled against the U.S. concerning the mining of Nicaragua's harbors. The inclusion of the aforementioned passage may have drawn attention that an inconsistency in the recognition of such international jurisdiction.

When Bush defined principles as the pragmatic goals of a policy option, he still needed to satisfy the audience's need for moral justification. Policy rhetors could not simply define principles as pragmatic goals, as the audience might associate principles with moral justifications. Instead, rhetors must satisfy expectations befitting the divinely inspired state of American exceptionalism. In lieu of such an offering, rhetors offer an antagonist against whom any action must by necessity be just. That this antagonist is more easily understood than the "enemy" faced by the U.S. in Vietnam makes that

justification more resonant with those clinging to the Vietnam syndrome as a justification for inaction and passivity.

Moreover, in the event that his audience was wary of confronting such an antagonist, Bush offered assurance as to the limited strategic goals of military operations in the Gulf. In this case, the easily identified antagonist was paired with a clearly defined mission. Bush laid out a case suggesting that he had taken every possible precaution for the troops, stating that “Prior to ordering our forces into battle, I instructed our military commanders to take every necessary step to prevail as quickly as possible, and with the greatest degree of protection possible for American and allied service men and women.” Coupling the moral certainty of the past with the proficient assurances of the present might not prevent comparisons between Vietnam and the first Persian Gulf War, but it did provide a rebuttal to those unfavorable toward raising the comparison.

Bush also drew distinctions in terms of the ability of forces to complete the task arguing that he was “determined to bring them home as soon as possible.”⁸² The audience could contrast this with the vagueness of President Johnson’s efforts during the Vietnam War, as here Bush’s limited mission would facilitate the return of troops. In this regard, the aforementioned personal statements from the troops in his January 16, 1991, address on the necessity of confronting Iraq function alongside the arguments concerning the return of the troops. Bush coupled this with a later statement in the 1991 State of the Union address that “our forces in the Gulf will not stay there one day longer than is necessary to complete their mission.”⁸³ In doing so, he projected an image of returned troops from a mission accomplished, and the troops had in turn suggested that the mission from which they would return was a worthwhile cause. This message featured

two notable rhetorical dimensions: the first is the use of time, as they would not stay “one day longer,” such that the length of their commitment was not longer than necessary, a vague commitment with the ring of brevity. The second dimension is in the notion of “mission” itself, as the troops are carrying out a task that they see as morally necessary. In making these arguments, Bush sought to alleviate the uncertainty regarding force deployments to Iraq and the inevitable comparison of similar deployments to Vietnam.

Although new foreign policy concerns dominated the president’s agenda, Vietnam continued to color public memory when issues of military deployment are at stake.⁸⁴ In the first Persian Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush could not completely cast aside the public and elite perception of the Vietnam War, if only because he was himself likely an adherent of that perception. He did address the concerns of American exceptionalism in speaking of the principles that have long guided U.S. foreign policy. However, Bush also reconfigured the meaning of principles, alleviating some of the burdens in constructing the war rhetoric. Principles became the outcome of policy action, enabling the president to describe events in such a way as to emphasize their significance to the defeat of the United States in the jungles of Southeast Asia. The president’s ability to contrast the Gulf War with the Vietnam War spoke to the lingering impact of that conflict. It also provided an example of how a chief executive might justify military action in ways that reassure the public without necessitating the full-bore application of more treacherous moral arguments.

According to Bush, the troops in the Gulf were better or at least possessed of more desirable qualities than were their predecessors in Vietnam. The public strongly

supported the war in the Gulf and had good reasons to do so. Their support, in Bush's vision, might allow the nation to become stronger and more united. Moreover, he referenced "principles" served by the U.S. effort to oust Iraq from Kuwait, but defined principles such that they reflected pragmatic as much as moral concerns. These same principles allowed him to define victory narrowly in that conflict, such that, in spite of the continued threat posed by Iraq, the U.S. had achieved a decisive victory.

Notes

1. Mary Stuckey, *Strategic Failures in the Modern Presidency*, (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc., 1997), 163.
2. Although this statement was not present in an earlier typewritten draft of the speech, the speech's author had handwritten it in the margins of the space in which it would appear in the final draft. From the George H.W. Bush Collection, George Bush Personal Papers Series: Congressional Files, 1963-1971, Subseries: Congressional File-General, Box 1, Folder-George Bush Speech on Vietnam-Houston, TX January 11, 1968, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
3. Michael H. Hunt, *Lyndon Johnson's War: America's Cold War Crusade in Vietnam, 1945-1968* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 125.
4. There is perhaps no better demonstration of this consensus than conservative Norman Podhoretz, who posits how own retrospective defense of the war as an answer to the emergence of such a consensus. See Podhoretz, *Why We Were in Vietnam* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1982). For a more conventional work representative of this consensus, see former Vietnam-era Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Brian VanDeMark, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, (New York: Random House Publishing, 1995). See also David L. Anderson, "The Military and Diplomatic Course of the Vietnam War," in *The Oxford Companion to American Military History*, ed. John Chambers Whiteclay II (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); and H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, The Joint Chiefs of*

- Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam*, (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1998).
5. John M. Murphy, "Crafting the Kennedy Legacy," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 3 (2000): 581.
 6. Robert L. Ivie, "Metaphor and Motive in the Johnson Administration's Vietnam War Rhetoric," in *Texts in Context*, eds. Michael C. Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld, (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1989), 121-93.
 7. Several different assessments of Nixon's November 3, 1969, address to the nation found that although the public responded favorably to that address, it had several rhetorical and ethical shortcomings. See Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "An Exercise in the Rhetoric of Mythic America," in her book *Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1972), 50-58; Robert P. Newman, "Under the Veneer: Nixon's Vietnam Speech of November 3, 1969," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56 (1970): 169-178; and Hermann G. Stelzner, "The Quest Story and Nixon's November 3, 1969 Address," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 57 (1971): 163-172. Contrary opinions are also available, most notably Forbes Hill, whose own noteworthy contribution on the November 3, 1969, address first also appeared in *QJS*. See Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form—The President's Message of November 3, 1969," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 58 (1972): 373-386.
 8. Loren Baritz, *Backfire: A History of How American Culture Led Us Into Vietnam and Made Us Fight the Way We Did* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1984), 40.

9. Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Paradox of American Politics," *The Public Interest* (1975): 148.
10. U.S. support for the French colonial government in Indochina had been a concern since the Truman administration. It was, however, Eisenhower's 1954 commitment of aircraft and technicians that marked the first direct provision of military to stabilize the region. Although such support was expanded short of direct military intervention, Eisenhower remained cautious of further engagement, holding reservations which he tempered in his own public pronouncements on the war. See Gregory A. Olson, "Eisenhower and the Indochina Problem," in *Eisenhower's War of Words: Rhetoric and Leadership*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 97-135; and Fred I. Greenstein and Richard H. Immerman, "What Did Eisenhower Tell Kennedy About Indochina?: The Politics of Misperception," *Journal of American History* 79(1992): 568-587.
11. John Mueller, "The Search for the 'Breaking Point' in Vietnam: The Statistics of a Deadly Quarrel," *International Studies Quarterly* 24(1980): 498-499. See also Bob Buzzanco, "The American Military's Rationale Against the Vietnam War," *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (1986): 564; David E. Kaiser, "Review Essay: Vietnam—Was the System the Solution?" *International Security* 4 (1980): 199-201.
12. Leslie H. Gelb of the Council on Foreign Relations argued that the foreign policy elite believed they would face multiple repercussions for failing in Vietnam, including "opening the floodgates" to domestic criticism for being soft on

- communism, dissipating Presidential influence in responding to the criticism, alienating congressional conservatives, hurting their future political prospects and increasing the risk of a reactionary right-wing response. See Gelb, "Vietnam: The System Worked," *Foreign Policy* (1971): 143.
13. Cori E. Dauber, "The Shots Seen 'Round the World: The Impact of the Images of Mogadishu on American Military Operations," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 4(2001): 658.
 14. Dauber cites the work of Andrew Krepinevich, Jr., who argued that casualties alone accounted less for declining support than the combination of casualties with little apparent military gains in the region, in spite of continued government reassurances to the contrary. Sociologist James Burk suggests that what he refers to as "the casualties hypothesis" holds little merit, in spite of its persuasive hold on the political elite. See Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986) and James Burk, "Public Support for Peacekeeping in Lebanon and Somalia: Assessing the Casualties Hypothesis," *Political Science Quarterly* 114 (1999): 53-78.
 15. Scott Sigmund Gartner, "Differing Evaluations of Vietnamization," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29 (1998): 243-244; Melvin R. Laird, "A Strong Start in a Difficult Decade: Defense Policy in the Nixon-Ford Years," *International Security* 10 (1985): 7-8; and Allan E. Goodman, Randolph Harris, and John C. Wood, "South Vietnam and the Politics of Self-Support," *Asian Survey* 11(1971): 2-3.

16. See Jeffrey Record, *Making War, Thinking History: Munich, Vietnam, and the Presidential Uses of Force from Korea to Kosovo* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 25.
17. Quoted in Mark Rozell, *The Press and the Carter Presidency* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989), 164-165.
18. Reagan won 489 electoral votes to Carter's 49. Post-election analysis by ABC News suggested that 1 in 4 voters settled on a candidate in the last week of the election. A televised announcement by Carter announcing a potential break through with Iran just prior to the election likely turned voters off to the president as it simply served to remind them of his continued inability to free the hostages. Carter's own memoir suggested that the public came to associate the hostage crisis with the overall impotency of his presidency. See Burton I. Kauffman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr.*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 205-208; and Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 179.
19. Robert J. McMahon, "Rationalizing Defeat: The Vietnam War in American Presidential Discourse," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2(1999): 539.
20. McMahon, "Rationalizing Defeat," 540.
21. Quoted in George N. Dionisopoulos and Stephen R. Goldzwig, "'The Meaning of Vietnam': Political Rhetoric as Revisionist Cultural History," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (1992): 79.
22. Dionisopoulos and Goldzwig, "'The Meaning of Vietnam,'" 63.

23. Mark P. Lagon, "The International System and the Reagan Doctrine: Can Realism Explain Aid to Freedom Fighters," *British Journal of Political Science* 22 (1992): 39; Robert H. Johnson, "Misguided Morality: Ethics and the Reagan Doctrine," *Political Science Quarterly* 103(1988): 509-510; and James M. Scott, "Interbranch Rivalry and the Reagan Doctrine in Nicaragua," *Political Science Quarterly* 112 (1997): 237.
24. Record, *Making War, Thinking History*, 27-28.
25. Dionisopoulos and Goldzwig, "The Meaning of Vietnam," 61-79.
26. Dionisopoulos and Goldzwig, "The Meaning of Vietnam," 69.
27. Dionisopoulos and Goldzwig, "The Meaning of Vietnam," 75.
28. Record, *Making War, Thinking History*, 27-28.
29. Record, *Making War, Thinking History*, 131.
30. George Bush and Brent Scowcroft *A World Transformed* (New York: Arnold A. Knopf, 1998), 431.
31. Juan J. Walte, "U.S. Toll Would Be Heavy In All-Out War; Thousands Of Casualties Likely," *USA Today* 16 August 1990, 1.
32. Michael Wines, "Confrontation In The Gulf: Largest Force Since Vietnam Committed in 15-Day Flurry," *New York Times*, 19 August 1990, Section 1-1.
33. The poll question in its entirety read "How likely do you think it is that the U.S. involvement in Saudi Arabia could turn into another situation like Vietnam—that is, that the United States could become more and more deeply involved as time goes on? Would you say this is very likely, fairly likely, fairly unlikely, or very unlikely? Of the respondents, 22% indicated "very likely," 26% indicated "fairly

- likely,” 28% indicated “fairly unlikely,” 18% indicated “very unlikely,” and 6% were of no opinion on the matter. From George E. Gallup, *The Gallup Poll: Public Opinion 1990* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1991), 95.
34. This bibliometric analysis used the *Nexis* database maintained by Mead Data Central, searching approximately 6,600 stories. See Tim Miller, “By the Numbers I: The Bibliometrics of War,” in *The Media at War: The Press and the Persian Gulf*, eds. Craig LaMay, et al (New York: Gannett Foundation Media Center, 1991), 41.
35. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, 354.
36. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 81, Folder-State of the Union 1991 1/29/01 [OA 6028], Document: “30 December, 1990, Memorandum for Governor Sununu, From: Roger B. Porter, Subject: State of the Union Address: Themes,” George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
37. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 81, Folder-State of the Union 1991 1/29/01 [OA 6028], Document: “30 December, 1990, Memorandum for Governor Sununu, From: Roger B. Porter, Subject: State of the Union Address: Themes.”
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 42. Hans Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 26.
 43. Stephen A. Garret, "The Relevance of Great Debates: An Analysis of the Discussion Over Vietnam," *Journal of Politics* 33 (1971): 481.
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- years of home confinement. See George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1979), 213 and 236.
45. Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1975), 393.
 46. Eric T. Dean, Jr., "The Myth of the Troubled and Scorned Vietnam Veteran," *Journal of American Studies* 26(1992), 61.
 47. Dean, "The Myth of the Troubled and Scorned Vietnam Veteran," 62-63.
 48. Dean, "The Myth of the Troubled and Scorned Vietnam Veteran" 63. He quotes "When Johnny Comes Marching Home," *America* March 1973, 255-256.
 49. Bill McCloud, "What Should We Tell Our Children About Vietnam?" *American Heritage* 39 (1988), 60.
 50. "Inaugural Address, January 20, 1989." *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1989, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1990), 3.
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 52. "Radio Address to the Nation on the Persian Gulf Crisis, January 5, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 10.

53. "Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf, January 16, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume I*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 44.
54. Michael H. Hunt, *Lyndon Johnson's War: America's Cold War Crusade in Vietnam, 1945-1968* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 134.
55. Hunt, *Lyndon Johnson's War*, 134.
56. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 80, Folder-Reserve Officers Assoc. 1/23/91 [OA 6028], Document: Memorandum for Chriss Winston, From Roger B. Porter, Subject: Reserve Officers Association Remarks, McNally/Simon, January 19, 1991 Draft Two (B:Reserve), Presidential Remarks: U.S. Reserve Officers Association, Washington Hilton, Wednesday, January 23, 1991.
57. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 80, Folder-Reserve Officers Assoc. 1/23/91 [OA 6028], Document: Memorandum for Chriss Winston, From Roger B. Porter, Subject: Reserve Officers Association Remarks, McNally/Simon, January 19, 1991 Draft Two (B: Reserve), Presidential Remarks: U.S. Reserve Officers Association, Washington Hilton, Wednesday, January 23, 1991. Porter's suggestion was only partially embraced.
58. "Address to the Nation on the Iraqi Statement on Withdrawal From Kuwait, February 26, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George*

- Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 176.
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63. A New York Times/CBS news poll showed a 76% approval rating for Bush on August 22, 2000, approximately within the same week that Bush noted Baker’s reservations. See Michael Oreskes, “Confrontation in the Gulf: President Regains Record Rating in Crisis,” *New York Times* August 22, 1990, A-13.
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68. Dionisopoulos and Goldzwig, "The Meaning of Vietnam," 63-64.
69. I am once more not inferring that the public opposed the war or supporting the casualty aversion hypothesis but that the belief among the political elite, and arguably the popular culture, is sustained if not substantively feasible.
70. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George*

- Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 74.
71. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict, March 6, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, 222.
 72. "Address on the National Days of Thanksgiving, March 22, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 298.
 73. Kathleen M. German, "Invoking the Glorious War: Framing the Persian Gulf Conflict Through Directive Language," *Southern Communication Journal* 60(1995): 300.
 74. Mary E. Stuckey, "Remembering the Future: Rhetorical Echoes of World War II and Vietnam in George Bush's Rhetoric on the Gulf War," *Communication Studies* 43(1992): 246-256.
 75. See Kathleen M. German, "Invoking the Glorious War: Framing the Persian Gulf Conflict Through Directive Language," *Southern Communication Journal* 60(1995).
 76. Record, *Making War, Thinking History*, 11-18.
 77. "Address to the Nation Announcing the Deployment of United States Armed Forces to Saudi Arabia, August 8, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1108.

78. "Address Before the 45th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York, October 1, 1990," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1990, Volume 2*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1332.
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80. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 69, Folder-United Nations General Assembly Address 10/1/90 [OA 5377][1], Document: National Security Council Executive Secretariat Staffing Document, System Log Number 7689, Prepare Memo: Scowcroft to Chriss Winston, McNally/Simon, September 26, 1990 Draft Four (B:U.N.), Presidential Remarks: United Nations General Assembly, New York City, Monday, October 1, 1990, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
81. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 69, Folder-United Nations General Assembly Address 10/1/90 [OA 5377][1], Document: National Security Council Executive Secretariat Staffing Document, System Log Number 7689, Prepare Memo: Scowcroft to Chriss Winston, McNally/Simon, September 26, 1990 Draft Four (B:U.N.), Presidential Remarks: United Nations General Assembly, New York City, Monday, October 1, 1990.

82. "Address to the Nation Announcing Allied Military Action in the Persian Gulf, January 16, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume I*, 44.
83. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume I*, 79.
84. See Seymour Hersh, "Moving Targets: Will the Counter-Insurgency Plan in Iraq Avoid the Mistakes of Vietnam?" *The New Yorker* 15 December 2003: 48; "A New Vietnam Issue in Iraq," *Business Week* 1 March 2004: 37; and Peter Mansbridge, "Iraq: A New Vietnam?" *Macleans*, 17 November 2003: 24.

CHAPTER V

TRIUMPH IN THE GULF:

RHETORICALLY CONSTRUCTING VICTORY IN THE FIRST WAR WITH

IRAQ

i do not think the prudent one
hastes to initiate
a sequence of events which he
lacks the power to terminate

Don Marquis, *Archy and Mehitabel*
Poem 42 "Prudence"

In the wake of Kuwait's liberation, President Bush lamented the absence of a definitive symbol marking the victory of the U.S.-led military coalition over the forces of Saddam Hussein. As he noted in his diary on February 28, 1991:

I see on the television that public opinion in Jordan and in the streets of Baghdad is that they have won. It is such a canard, so little, but it's what concerns me. It hasn't been a clean end-there is no battleship *Missouri* surrender. That's what's missing to make this akin to WWII, to separate Kuwait from Korea and Vietnam.¹

According to Bush, General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Robert Gates, Director of Central Intelligence, provided him with some optimism regarding the U.S. effort. Both indicated that the U.S.-led effort was historically unique in that forces stopped short of eradicating Hussein's forces. Once U.S. forces drove Iraq from Kuwait, they allowed Iraq to continue to exist as a sovereign entity, demonstrating that the United States "didn't just want to kill," preferring instead to be judged kindly by history for that quality of mercy.²

In remarks prior to an April 16, 1991, press conference, Bush announced that the U.S. would provide assistance to Iraqi refugees. In doing so, he took pains to describe this relief effort as "an undertaking different in scale and approach" than the military

operation intended to remove Hussein from Kuwait.³ Bush alleged that this approach was consistent with basic policy toward the region, which included the fact that the U.S. was “not going to intervene militarily in Iraq’s internal affairs and risk being drawn into a Vietnam-style quagmire.”⁴

In this chapter, I offer the argument that Bush defined victory in several ways after the Gulf War. First, before and during the war, Bush’s staff made efforts to cautiously avoid reference to broad goals for U.S. military operations in the Gulf, particularly avoiding charges that military efforts were geared toward regime change. Second, when victory was defined, it was in reference to objectives identified as principles guiding U.S. action in the region. Specifically, these principles defined the war in the Gulf as a specific conflict whose goal was the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, in spite of the continued regional threat posed by Iraq.

Third, Bush defended his decision to limit the mission objectives as necessary to avoid a Vietnam-like quagmire. This better enabled him to label the U.S. action as a “victory,” in contrast to the “defeat” of American forces in Vietnam. In doing so, the conflict had a distinct beginning and end, such that the president could plausibly argue that the U.S. military accomplished its mission in spite of its failure to achieve longer-term regional stability and to eliminate the continuing threat posed by Saddam Hussein. It also played into a more prudential assessment of the U.S. role in the Gulf. The attainment of a stated objective and the definition of that attainment as a victory for the U.S. satisfied the realist adherence to limited objectives while simultaneously proclaiming that what the U.S. did achieve was consistent with a new and “exceptional” role as a protector of the new international order.

However, much of Bush's argument was in large part undermined by the final manner in which he characterized victory. In this fourth theme, Bush relied less on the humility that guided his prior addresses, instead emphasizing the totalizing nature of U.S. victory, often in contrast to the recollection of others, a definition which may have proven costly for Bush's political future. Before addressing this strategic contrast in greater depth, I will explain how American understandings of "defeat" in Vietnam influenced characterizations of victory.

Overcoming Defeat in Vietnam and Defining Victory in the Gulf War

If the goal of the Vietnam War was to prevent South Vietnam from falling into the hands of the communist North, then the U.S. sustained a defeat. The question of defeat, however, is less significant than the perception of defeat that dominated historical understandings of the war.⁵ In 1998, sociologists Charles C. Moskos and James Burk called the Gulf War "a quintessentially postmodern war" as they determined that there was no standard "allowing everyone to agree" on whether the United States attained victory during the Persian Gulf war.⁶

Broader questions relating to regional stability further complicated the issue of victory. One day after the war's cessation on February 28, 1991, Iraqis in the north and south sides of the country rose up against the regime in Baghdad. Iraqi forces subsequently crushed this uprising, resulting in the deaths of 20,000 Iraqi Kurds and the creation of 2 million refugees who subsequently attempted to flee into Turkey.⁷ This resulted in Operation Provide Comfort, a U.S. humanitarian intervention that continued through December of 1996.⁸ President Bill Clinton launched a military assault against military sites in Iraq in 1996 as well, in response to Iraqi violations of the no-fly zone

established during Operation Provide comfort.⁹ As Alain Gresh of *Le Monde Diplomatique* noted, “the order born of the Gulf War looks more like disorder.”¹⁰ Although Bush’s coalition had expelled Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991, his “victory” was becoming retrospectively elusive.

Joel H. Rosenthal argued that realists themselves “were skeptical of the terms “victory” and “defeat.”¹¹ Realists believed that the indiscriminate use of force decreased the chances that such force would achieve desirable political objectives. From the realist perspective, any opportunity to define a military operation more explicitly in terms of its pragmatic execution and outcome might prove beneficial after the debacle in Vietnam.

Rhetorical critic Kenneth Zagacki identified efforts by presidents Nixon and Ford to address the war in Vietnam as a failure. In Nixon’s address announcing the 1973 Paris Peace Accords that effectively ended U.S. combat operations in Vietnam, Zagacki argued that Nixon laid the groundwork for scapegoating those who favored a quick abandonment of the U.S. commitment to Vietnam. Nixon did so by referring to an America “that did not settle for a peace that would have betrayed our allies.”¹² Nixon’s successor, Gerald R. Ford, laid the blame for the Fall of Saigon at the feet of Congress, arguing that expenditures had declined in fiscal 1974, and then left it to “the American people to pass judgment on who was at fault or where the blame may rest.”¹³ No less a figure than General William Westmoreland, the Commander of the Armed Forces in Vietnam, typified an emergent strain of belated justification for the U.S. failure, referring to the “no-win” situation U.S. forces had been forced into by their civilian leadership.¹⁴

In contrast to Vietnam, the recognition of victory in the Gulf was relatively widespread. In a 1999 address celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff, President Bill Clinton referenced the Gulf War alongside World Wars I and II, the Cold War, and the U.S. victory in the Balkans during his own administration as evidence of the strength of U.S. military commitments.¹⁵ This was but one of several references to the Gulf victory that Bush's 1992 electoral rival made over the course of his two terms in office. While Bush's rhetorical efforts to define the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait were not uniquely responsible for shaping the public's perception of that conflict, his assurances that victory had in fact occurred and that the Vietnam syndrome had been thoroughly defeated were no doubt persuasive claims to a great many Americans.

Washington Post columnist Mary McGrory, for example, argued that Bush "excised the Vietnam syndrome from the country's psyche."¹⁶ Dov Zacheim, former Deputy Undersecretary of Defense during the Reagan administration, pointed to the U.S. victory in the Gulf as the final nail in the coffin for the Vietnam syndrome.¹⁷ Public sentiment in the war's aftermath seemed to point to a similar sentiment, with Bush enjoying popularity unseen since, and exceeding Harry S Truman's World War II-era polling.¹⁸

The Meanings of Victory in the Gulf

The Initial Terms of Victory

Although Bush came to define the war in the Gulf as a specific, limited conflict, the goal of which was the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, this definition did differ from some earlier tendencies to define the mission objectives in broader terms. In a 1991 address, for example, Bush indicated that Iraq's capacity to sustain war was being destroyed as Hussein's "war machine was crushed."¹⁹

In a similar vein, speechwriter Mark Davis indicated that the NSC cautioned Bush against referring to Hussein as Hitler because of its implication for the objective of

military operations. “The thinking was that if he was another Hitler, then he had to be taken out completely, we had to invade Iraq and take over the country,” Davis noted.²⁰

In another case, Bush’s rhetorical orientation of victory in Iraq also departed from the messages constructed by his speechwriters. In a White House staffing memorandum dated February 28, 1991 from National Security advisor Brent Scowcroft to Chriss Winston, Scowcroft prominently edited the second draft of a radio address that Bush was to deliver to U.S. troops in the Gulf on March 1, 1990. The original text read as follows:

And the world was faced with a simple choice: If Iraq could not or would not remove Saddam Hussein from power – then we had to remove power from Saddam Hussein.²¹

The final text featured changes based on Scowcroft’s handwritten suggestions.

Scowcroft removed the reference to the removal of Hussein from power. In its place, was a newer statement emphasizing a more limited outcome: “If international law and sanctions could not remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, then we had to free Kuwait from Saddam Hussein.”²²

Principled Victory

David Demarest recalled the President’s concern following the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait that U.S. military operations in the Gulf not develop any further objectives. “Shooting people while they’re running away is not what this country is about,” he recalled Bush saying. Bush was specifically referencing the military interception of looters from Basra after the cessation of major combat activities. Demarest believed that this incident had a profound effect on Bush’s assessment of the immediate post-war situation:

It was clear that the Iraqi army was absolutely defeated. And there were the options of “what do we do now?” The President felt very strongly that we had to

stop. That the coalition would fall apart if we exceeded what was the coalition mandate, which was simply kick him out of Kuwait, eliminate his ability to threaten his neighbors, and eliminate his ability to use weapons of mass destruction. So it wasn't to decapitate the government.²³

In order for Bush's argument to retain any sense of historical merit, he had to define the terms of victory narrowly so that the public could embrace his conception of victory. In the narrowest of terms, his earliest pronouncement as to the terms of victory came in the four principles mentioned in his August 8, 1990, address: the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, the restoration of Kuwait's sovereign government to power; a commitment to regional stability and the protection of Americans abroad. By war's end, Bush relied on these principles as the standard for determining the success of the U.S. mission in the Gulf.

These principles, however, did not function in isolation. The Administration combined these principles with a broader effort to couch victory in more limited terms, such that that U.S. victory in the Gulf offered no guarantee of international peace. For Bush, the Gulf War became a limited conflict that did not necessarily offer a prediction of the world that was to come:

We've learned the hard lessons of history. The victory over Iraq was not waged as "a war to end all wars." Even the new world order cannot guarantee an era of perpetual peace.²⁴

Bush's qualification of the nature of the United States victory was consistent with his earlier portrayal of the war as a historically situated, limited conflict. However, maintaining that victory required a consistent rhetorical effort on his part to define narrowly the terms of victory in the Gulf War.

In a March 1 press conference, Bush distinguished between the war in Persian Gulf and efforts "securing the victory that our forces have achieved."²⁵ On March 4, in

comments before veterans' organizations, Bush reiterated that the U.S. had "kicked the Vietnam syndrome" in the Gulf, arguing that the return of U.S. forces from that region might create greater appreciation for the role of Vietnam veterans.²⁶ In this same speech, Bush went further, somehow reconciling celebration of victory in the Gulf with national humility.

And so, as we rejoice in our victory, I think we can also rejoice in the fact that we are a humble nation – that we have pride, of course, in what took place, but we are not gloating. We are not trying to rub it in. What we stood for was a principle.²⁷

America, in Bush's rhetoric, was not a braggart and arguably retained some degree of humility, albeit in this case no longer cautioned by the "Vietnam" syndrome. Instead, America derived her sense of national humility from her essential goodness, rather than the lingering memories of defeat in the jungles of Southeast Asia. This newfound sense of purpose continued when, in his March 6, 1991, address to a joint session of Congress on the conflict's cessation, Bush immediately laid to rest any notion that U.S. hegemony alone would result in permanent peace and security. For these problems, he argued, "there is no single solution, no solely American answer."²⁸ Instead, he argued that America would "work tirelessly as a catalyst for positive change."²⁹

Any regional change would occur only with the assistance of the international community. Bush's reference to principled victory also indicated that in adhering to these principles, the United States remained committed to the international consensus that guided action in the Gulf. As he noted in his April 16, 1991, press conference, "I think I would call to the attention of the critics what the objectives were, what the United Nations resolutions called for. And I think that they were admirably completed."³⁰

Bush's defense of the U.S. decision to end the conflict for reasons of principle was not limited to public statements. One such rhetorical effort was in the publication of *A World Transformed*, Bush's memoir, written with his National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, detailed his handling of foreign policy issues over the course of his administration. Lawrence Freedman of Kings College in London indicated that Bush's book, and its coincidental release alongside the political ascendancy of George W. Bush, marked "a retrospective endorsement of his presidency."³¹ Another review by Thomas A. Schwartz of Vanderbilt University called the book "a compelling defense of the administration's policy, including leaving Saddam Hussein in Baghdad."³² Harvey Sicherman of the Foreign Policy Research Institute and a former member of Secretary of State James Baker III's policy staff noted that the book "does contain evidence for a more convincing argument of what happened and why."³³

The significance of the title should not be discounted. Historian Gaddis Smith indicated that the title of *A World Transformed* recalled an earlier book by Henry Kissinger entitled *A World Restored*.³⁴ Other authors spoke of the inordinate attention devoted in the text to the Gulf War at the expense of other events, suggesting a hierarchy of significance with the Gulf War victory ranking alongside the management of the Soviet Union's collapse and the management of relations with China in the wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre.³⁵

In *A World Transformed*, Bush indicated that even before he was aware of his options for dealing with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, he "did know for sure that the aggression had to be stopped and Kuwait's sovereignty restored."³⁶ Scowcroft, Morgenthau's former student, was more immediately explicit in laying out military

objectives of U.S. action in Operation Desert Storm as he noted that foremost “among those was to reduce the Iraqi military machine as much as possible” and “to reduce the threat Saddam posed to his neighbors.”³⁷

Avoiding the Quagmire

Bush at this point turned to terminology related to futility and paralleling the language of opponents of the Vietnam War in justifying his limited objectives. If the U.S. went beyond the authority of Security Council resolutions, he argued that forces would be led into a “fruitless” search for a “securely entrenched dictator.”³⁸ They would be “condemned” to an “unwinnable urban guerilla war.”³⁹ Instead, Bush argued that “the American people want their sons and daughters to come home, and they’re going to come home,” as the mission had been accomplished. Any efforts beyond the removal of Iraq from Kuwait constituted, like assisting war refugees, posed “only little difficulty” for U.S. forces.⁴⁰

In describing the initial events of Desert Storm in *A World Transformed* Bush re-articulated the explicit objectives of his policy to “end the aggression, knock Iraq’s forces out of Kuwait, and restore Kuwait’s leaders.”⁴¹ However, the consequences of failing to adhere to these objectives were now rendered explicitly as fears that going further and occupying Iraq “would instantly shatter our coalition, turning the whole Arab world against us” and transform “a broken tyrant into a latter-day Arab hero.”⁴²

In spite of what seemed like certainty in depicting U.S. objectives against Iraq, Bush and Scowcroft lamented the implications of the war’s cessation: the failure to destroy the Republican Guard, the unsuccessful uprising of various minority populations in the region, and the continuing regional threat posed by Hussein. Their response to

these issues, however, extended back to their aforementioned adherence to principle. In this case, however, that principle was defined such that the implications of violating it were potentially catastrophic:

Trying to eliminate Saddam, extending the ground war into an occupation of Iraq, would have violated our guideline about not changing objectives in mid-stream, engaging in “mission creep” and would have incurred incalculable human and political costs.⁴³

Bush now used American casualty aversion as an argument against expanded regional involvement in the Persian Gulf. Coupled with his earlier use of terms related to mission futility, Bush described the Gulf War and its outcome as the antithesis of the war in Vietnam. Going beyond the objectives laid out in the U.N. Security Council would have led to a potentially futile quagmire not unlike the war in Vietnam, versus the actual U.S. mission objective in simply removing Hussein from Kuwait and restoring the leaders of Kuwait.

Bush went further in his use of the Vietnam analogy. While the previous chapter argued that Bush compared the Gulf War favorably to the U.S. experience in Vietnam, in the aftermath of the war, Bush compared the mission completed by the U.S. favorably to the Vietnam-like quagmire that would have ensued if the U.S. had attempted to depose Hussein.

Bold Victory

Bush largely defined the nature of that catalyst in relation to the defeat of the Vietnam syndrome. During his commencement address at the University of Michigan on May 4, 1991, in justifying Operation Provide Comfort and other humanitarian efforts in the wake of the U.S. “victory” in the Gulf, Bush argued that the nature of that victory had emboldened Americans:

Our successes have banished the Vietnam era phantoms of doubt and distrust. And in my recent travels around the country, I have felt an idealism that we Americans supposedly had lost. People have faith in the future, and they ask what next, and they ask, "How can I help?" We have rediscovered the power of the idea that toppled the Berlin Wall and led a world to strike back at Saddam Hussein.⁴⁴

The end of post-Vietnam pessimism was so thoroughly defeated by Bush's foreign policy successes, among which he explicitly cites the U.S. opposition to the invasion of Iraq, that Americans now support more active humanitarian intervention.

In his postwar address to a joint session of Congress, Bush first introduced the suggestion that his foreign policy agenda could reflect his domestic agenda. The limited conflict against Iraq provided a model for domestic efficiency. As he noted of the war "there were clear-cut objectives" and "an overriding imperative to achieve results" which can be applied "the way we meet challenges here at home."⁴⁵

Bush clearly relied upon the assumption that his own audience perceived the U.S. action in the Gulf as a victory for the United States, such that victory in the foreign policy venue could be replicated in domestic policy. Although Bush failed to elaborate thoroughly on his new use of Iraq as an analogue for domestic efficiency, the failure of this argument owed less to the failure of his audience to perceive victory in the Gulf than on Bush's inability to articulate clearly a domestic policy vision.⁴⁶

Bush's rhetorical reflections on the Gulf War, in the immediate aftermath of that conflict, reflected a combination of humility and jubilation. In comments on a CBS television salute to the returning forces, Bush was more decisive and less humble in his interpretation:

You know, it's just a few short weeks ago the fighting in the Persian Gulf ended and complete victory for the coalition forces. . . You know, America rediscovered

itself during Desert Storm. First-rate military leaders executed a sound battle plan and delivered a swift victory.⁴⁷

Initially, he acknowledged the shortcomings of the United States action to remove Iraq from Kuwait, indicating that for the forces opposing Iraqi aggression, some work remained undone. Bush's address in acceptance of the Republican nomination for the Presidency in 1992 took a similar tone concerning the Persian Gulf War. Referring to remaining security threats in the absence of the Soviet Union, he noted that Saddam Hussein represented such a threat:

And we saw that when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. The Mideast might have become a nuclear powderkeg, our energy supplies held hostage. So we did what was right, and what was necessary. We destroyed a threat, freed a people, and locked a tyrant in the prison of his own country.⁴⁸

In spite of his earlier regrets regarding the cessation of hostilities, here before a principally partisan crowd, Bush reconstructed the conflict. Bush's reference to the nuclear "powderkeg" intensified the impact of Bush's argument on "energy supplies held hostage." This connotation, even if unintentional, retrospectively altered the stakes of U.S. participation in efforts to remove Iraq from Kuwait. The U.S. victory in the Gulf was no longer just decisive, but eliminated a threat.

The suggestion that the U.S. had eliminated this threat, however, was short-lived, as President George W. Bush rhetorically renewed the threat posed by Iraq in his 2003 State of the Union address.⁴⁹ Nonetheless, Bush had initiated a sustained effort to preserve his foreign policy legacy by retrospectively limiting U.S. objectives in the first Gulf War. This should not suggest that this historical assessment was intentionally deceptive. Instead, it posits that this assessment played a significant role in maintaining the perception among the electorate that what occurred during Operation Desert Storm

was a distinct victory for U.S. forces, in contrast to the failure that the U.S. faced in Vietnam.

By initially lessening the expectations of his audience as to the nature of the victory in the Gulf, Bush retrospectively emphasized the end result of the U.S. action as a victory in spite of continued hostility in the region. His arguments relied upon a conception of U.S. victory such that it provided a model for U.S. domestic policy and justified U.S. humanitarian intervention as he could argue that Americans were emboldened by the U.S. victory. The impact of this rhetoric should not be underestimated. As historian Michael Howard noted in reviewing *A World Transformed*, “In retrospect, 1989-91 now seems as briefly euphoric as 1944-45.”⁵⁰

The public euphoria following the Gulf War may have also resulted perhaps the most prominent political miscalculation of the Bush White House. While some in the White House, notably Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater, Communications Director David Demarest, and Gregg Petersmyer of the Points of Life Foundation, feared that the political implications of the Gulf victory could prove ephemeral, others, notably Chief of Staff John Sununu, saw electoral victory in 1992 as predetermined by the outcome of the Gulf War.⁵¹ Demarest described the longer-term consequences of that outcome for Bush’s political legacy in starker terms, noting that it created doubt among some segments of the population who would go on to argue, “Bush should have gone up there and finished the job.”⁵² As Bush ran on a platform that prominently dealt with the war, the questions spurred by his decision to limit the conflict seemed to run contrary to his increasingly bold rhetoric in describing the war’s outcome. Bush’s bold proclamations of

victory gave way, once more to a justification of his war aims based on principle, limiting the conflict to one with a clearly defined terminal outcome.

Notes

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7. Ronald Offeringer and Ralf Backer, "A Republic of Statelessness: Three Years of Humanitarian Intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan," *Middle East Report*, March-June 1994, 40.
8. Offeringer and Backer, "A Republic of Statelessness," 40.
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12. Kenneth Zagacki, "Rhetoric, Failure and the Presidency: The Case of Vietnam," *Communication Studies* 43 (1992), 47.
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20. From a personal telephone interview with Mark W. Davis, January 24, 1991.
21. From the Office of Speechwriting, Series: Speech Files, Drafts, 1989-1993, Box 85, Folder-Radio Message to U.S. Troops 3/1/91 [OA 6029], Document: McNally/Simon, February 28, 1991 Draft Two (A:Radio), Presidential Remarks: Radio Address to the U.S. Troops in the Gulf, Friday, March 1, 1991, George Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.
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45. "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Cessation of the Persian Gulf Conflict, March 6, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume I*, 221.

46. For more on “the vision thing” see Catherine L. Langford, “George Bush’s Struggle with the Vision Thing,” in *The Rhetorical Presidency of George H.W. Bush*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2006): 19-36.
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CHAPTER VI

LEARNING FROM THE PAST: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

We will consult. But let there be no misunderstanding: If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him.

President George Walker Bush
“Address before Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union”
January 28, 2003

Halfway around the world, we are engaged in a great struggle in the skies and on the seas and sands. We know why we're there: We are Americans, part of something larger than ourselves. For two centuries, we've done the hard work of freedom. And tonight, we lead the world in facing down a threat to decency and humanity.

President George Herbert Walker Bush
“Address before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union”
January 29, 1991

What is required of the circumspect observer who consults history as a teacher for action, then, is a sharp distinction between what is typical and what is unique in two historic situations. If the typical elements coincide and are relevant to the issue at hand, the lesson of the past can indeed be applied to the present.

Hans J. Morgenthau, 1969

In President George H.W. Bush's¹ rhetoric on the first Persian Gulf War, he reconciled two seemingly opposing concepts: realism, the theory of international relations espoused by figures like Han Morgenthau, George Kennan, and Henry Kissinger, and American exceptionalism, the dominant theme in the grand narrative of American foreign policy. He was not the first president to do so, as even iconic figures like Reagan and Kennedy were similarly constrained, and they similarly made use of idealistic and pragmatic arguments.² However, in responding to the rhetorical

constraints imposed by these two concepts, GHW Bush fashioned a rhetorical defense of his policy in militarily opposing Iraq's invasion of Kuwait that made not only explicit public use of both, but did so in a way that challenged assumptions about both. He advocated multilateral action and did not hesitate to evoke memories of Vietnam if only implicitly to compare his own military effort favorably to that perceived historical failure. GHW Bush used advocacy that seemed to embrace publicly calculated realist concerns regarding the national interest while still embracing the traditional notion that America should embrace a policy guided by its own morally exceptional nature.

In this, the concluding chapter of this dissertation, I will address the following issues. First, I briefly summarize the findings of this study. Second, I will identify some limitations of this research. Third, I will identify some implications from this research for our understandings of presidential rhetoric. Finally, I will conclude with a comparison of two notable State of the Union Addresses concerning Iraq, the first from George H.W. Bush in 1991, and the second from his son George W. Bush in 2003, to demonstrate how the rhetoric of the two Persian Gulf War has differed, and why that difference matters.

Findings, Limitations, and Rhetorical Implications

This dissertation began with a relatively simple inquiry. Why did GHW Bush, a president who both abhorred rhetoric, and whose rhetoric was largely abhorred by others, receive praise for his rhetoric during the first U.S. war in the Persian Gulf? In this dissertation, I argued that President GHW Bush relied on three particular arguments to facilitate a U.S. military victory during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

First, he promoted U.N. diplomacy as a subsidiary of U.S. foreign policy, where United States interests would not be constrained. Bush described the U.N. of the post-Cold War era as forever changed, no longer functioning as the politically constrained, impotent forum derided by the realists. Instead, it was renewed with its original sense of purpose and better able to address the needs of the U.S. and world communities in the absence of bilateral Cold War hostility.

Second, GHW Bush compared and contrasted U.S. action in the Gulf to the Vietnam War such that the military action in Iraq seemed morally urgent and explicitly competent, avoiding a repeat of the American experience in Vietnam. The troops were better than their Vietnam era predecessors, they did not face the same division that had torn the country apart during Vietnam, and they faced a mission that was better defined with a clear end in sight. GHW Bush portrayed the conflict as a product of longstanding American principles, while simultaneously emphasizing the modest strategic goals and minimal risk incurred by U.S. involvement.

Third, GHW Bush depicted the conflict as a discrete foreign policy event in which he narrowly defined victory as the removal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. In spite of the continued regional threat posed by Iraq and the U.S. failure to remove that threat, the war became a decisive foreign policy accomplishment.

These arguments not only offered a compelling case for the U.S. war against Iraq, but they also defied the standard categories describing the conduct of U.S. foreign policy and the rhetoric used in its justification. GHW Bush relied on public arguments that combined a realist orientation with the moralizing rhetoric of American exceptionalism, in spite of the fact that policymakers rarely offered realism in public defense of policy.

GHW Bush elevated the place of realism in public argument to a shared pedestal alongside American exceptionalism.

There were some identifiable limitations on this study. The first has to do with the limited focus on the events leading up to and immediately following Operations Desert Storm and Shield. GHW Bush had other notable foreign policy actions, including the U.S. invasion of Panama, the effort to restore order in Somalia under the auspices of Operation Restore Hope, and protection of refugees in Iraq under the auspices of Operation Provide Comfort. Determining how the president employed realist public advocacy, if at all, during other notable military operations might have permitted a more definitive understanding of realism in public policy discourse.

A second limitation concerns the use of realism in public policy. Although Scowcroft was a student of Kissinger, and the occasional policymaker has voiced praise for Morgenthau and realist theory, very rarely will policymakers publicly proclaim their adherence to realist doctrine as doing so might heighten scrutiny of their actions, or even be perceived as a limitation on the ability to act based upon the unique circumstances of a given case. While realism was a particularly fitting rhetorical vision that could be employed for the circumstances identified in prior chapters, whether it will retain a place of significance alongside American exceptionalism remains to be seen. While there is a good reason to associate GHW Bush's own use of what he refers to as prudence with realism, that association is largely conjecture.

A third limitation is in the use of realism as a singular concept. Realists might argue that realism is not a monolithic construct. To the contrary, the grand narrative of realist international relations has a number of subtle variations depending upon the teller

of that narrative. Realists included herein are not necessarily shoehorned into such a categorization, but among them, there exist differences of opinion. Kissinger was, after all, one of the architects of American policy in Vietnam under Nixon, and the cessation of active military involvement did not occur until Nixon's second term.

There were also implications from the study concerning GHW Bush's use of multilateralism. While others have covered GHW Bush's rhetoric on the Gulf War,³ none explained his use of the U.N. as a legitimizing rhetorical force, and particularly how these arguments operated in the wake of the realist hesitation to act multilaterally. GHW Bush succeeded not only because the U.N. was a legitimizing agent, but also because it bestowed legitimacy upon that organization.

Although both Stuckey and German have addressed comparisons between the first War in the Persian Gulf and the Vietnam War, here I explained the effectiveness in light of both implicit and explicit comparisons to the time, the situation and to the troops. GHW Bush continued to contrast the situations because it seemed to him to overcome the memories of that war, although those memories still linger. While Dionisopoulos and Goldzwig have argued that attempts to revise the "orthodox" history of "defeat" in Vietnam have failed,⁴ Zagacki and McMahon have independently identified rhetorical efforts to address the U.S. defeat.⁵ In this study, however, I have identified the Vietnam war as a useful rhetorical analogue for mission success. Now, rather than solely functioning as a caution against foreign policy action, implicitly comparing a military action against the Vietnam War might be used to differentiate that action as superior. The more a rhetor can successfully and favorably differentiate their particular situation

from the American experience in Vietnam, the more likely he or she is to explicitly present such a case to the people.

This study is also useful in that it identifies realism as both a conceptual constraint and as a rhetorical force. Robert Alexander Kraig has one of the few rhetorical works to explicitly deal with realism and its specific implications for presidential rhetoric.

Realism is a traditionally technical rhetoric rather than a public one. Here, however, I demonstrated how realism functioned in concert with more favored forms of public policy discourse. When tempered by American exceptionalism, realist arguments may seem more palatable to a public basking in the post-Cold War moment and better prepared for its cold, calculative rationality in light of the American experience in Vietnam.

GHW Bush's rhetoric might have better served the U.S. during the second war in the Gulf. As I will argue below, the Presidents Bush differed considerably in their approaches to U.S. policy in the Gulf. These differences have not favored the current administration. While the Gulf War of 1991 differed considerably from that of the 21st century, the younger Bush would seem best served by adhering to some of his father's lessons. In particular, GHW Bush's reliance on multilateral alliances for policy legitimation and his comparison to Vietnam in order to demonstrate the strength of his planning seem to provide some direction for a president seeking to initiate and conduct a conflict deemed successful by the public. The lesson itself never seemed to materialize in the rhetoric of GW Bush.

The Presidents Bush, the U.S. and the Persian Gulf

Although the adversarial relationship between the United States and the Baathist regime of Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein was the concern of three presidential administrations, U.S. efforts to combat militarily the regime have become most firmly associated with the Presidents George Herbert Walker Bush and his son, George Walker Bush. Even so, the rhetorical means by which the two Bush administrations advocated and defended their foreign policy actions differed considerably. Surprisingly, current policy seemed to lack the rhetorical posture of the initial Gulf War discourse, a development that has proven, to at least some minute degree, problematic.

According to Edward C. Luck, when then Governor GW Bush was asked in 2000 about how other nations looked at the United States, he responded in a way that seemed to reflect his father's disposition on diplomacy and foreign policy. He remarked, "if we're an arrogant nation, they'll resent us . . . Our nation stands alone right now in the world in terms of power. And that's why we've got to be humble and yet project strength in a way that promotes freedom."⁶ But the younger Bush did not embrace this vision for long.

As argued in prior chapters, GHW Bush's rhetoric on U.S. involvement in the Persian Gulf to repel the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait involved a calculated combination of realist argument within the prior rhetorical conventions of American exceptionalism. On January 20, 2004, George Walker Bush, 43rd President of the United States, delivered his fourth State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress. Although a number of issues were touched upon in that address, none drew greater attention than the continued U.S.-led military occupation of Iraq.⁷ The first major public address advocating the

invasion preceding that occupation had come a year earlier, in GW Bush's 2003 State of the Union address.

By the end of 2003, U.S.-led military forces had overthrown the Iraqi regime of dictator Saddam Hussein, and the GW Bush administration had since committed to the reconstruction of that Persian Gulf nation, which included efforts to assist in the establishment of a Western-style democracy.⁸ Although the invasion of Iraq and the subsequent capture of Hussein and other members of his regime received strong support from a significant segment of the American public,⁹ the second major U.S. military intervention in the Persian Gulf was not without difficulty for the second President Bush.

Although the circumstances differed considerably, some critics and advocates of the present administration's Iraq policy could not avoid comparing the 1991 and 2003 military campaigns.¹⁰ Unlike the 2003 campaign, reaction to George H. W. Bush's Iraq policy differed in two ways from reaction to his son's efforts. First, Operation Desert Storm and its earlier incarnation as Operation Desert Shield had enjoyed relative international consensus on the need to act in the Gulf.¹¹ Second, in spite of some early partisan legislative opposition to increased U.S. engagement in the Gulf,¹² President GHW Bush received strong and persistent domestic support for U.S. efforts in the region before and during the first war against Iraq.¹³

In fairness to the present administration, a comparison of the literature on the first Gulf War and the current war revealed one principal difference that existed between the rationales and justifications for the two Iraqi conflicts. Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm had significantly more limited objectives than Operation Iraqi Freedom. The stated and explicit objective of the coalition forces during the initial Desert Shield

phase of the first Gulf War was a defense of Saudi territory from a potential Iraqi incursion after Iraq's successful occupation of Kuwait. When Desert Shield gave way to Desert Storm, the U.S. ultimately shifted to the forced withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory. Operation Iraqi Freedom differed considerably in that it involved an implicitly offensive posture whose goal, in the words of reporter Todd Purdum, was "not just to repulse Saddam's invasion of a small neighboring country but to crush him on his own turf."¹⁴

Operation Desert Storm was never explicitly concerned with directly eliminating the sovereign authority of Hussein regime, a fact that some observers have partially attributed to the GHW Bush administration's desire to maintain the international coalition that facilitated U.S. efforts to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. As argued in Chapter I, exceeding that perceived international mandate for action in the Gulf would have disrupted that alliance, a fact not lost on the administration.¹⁵

The difficulty in achieving international consensus reflects what comparative political scholar Richard Rose identifies as the era of the "Postmodern President."¹⁶ Rose characterized the "Postmodern Presidency," as an institution influenced by the increasing interdependence between the United States and the international community, an interdependence facilitated to a great degree by the president's relative autonomy in shaping American foreign policy. Rose suggests that the president particularly utilizes its symbolic dominance in foreign policy to shape the public's perception on international events.¹⁷ Just as literature on the presidency has determined that the president is a success "if he can influence Washington and public opinion," success in an interdependent world "requires that foreign influences are consistent with his policy

choices.”¹⁸ As Rose and colleague Robert J. Thompson noted of President GHW Bush in an article written in the midst of his administration, the challenge facing GHW Bush was “to act internationally in situations in which other nations have significant influence too.”¹⁹

GHW Bush’s rhetorical success on the Persian Gulf conflict stands in marked contrast to the popular conception of his own rhetorical prowess. Andrew Furgeson, a GHW Bush speechwriter, said that Bush “thought of speeches as superficial P.R. events.”²⁰ However, in spite of his rhetorical reluctance, GHW Bush “was cognizant of the impact of a presidential statement and disciplined about what he said,” particularly regarding his rhetoric on the Gulf War where he “crafted his statements carefully, fully aware that his words reverberated both domestically and abroad.”²¹ This distinction between father and son is apparent in their rhetoric regarding their respective Gulf conflicts. In this case, I will compare the Gulf War rhetoric in the 1991 and 2003 State of the Union addresses.

Comparing the 1991 and the 2003 State of the Union Addresses

The 1991 State of the Union Address

GHW Bush owed his use of the United Nations as a legitimizing venue in part to the new situation that the organization found itself in during the post-Cold War period. As political scientist Donald J. Puchala noted:

the Bush administration’s focus on the United Nations in the Gulf crisis can be understood as the pragmatic targeting of a diplomatic venue where effective problem solving could be expected to take place.²²

Bush’s rhetoric demonstrates a keen awareness of the role of the U.N. in a post-Cold War order, making the new era a culmination of the first. The Cold War’s end has ushered in

a new era deprived of the threats borne of bilateral hegemonic hostility. The new world order was the product of that era, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was its first test:

What is at stake is more than one small country, it is a big idea—a new world order, where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind: peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law. Such is a world worthy of our struggle, and worthy of our children's future.²³

GHW Bush further implied that the world and the United Nations were one and the same, a suggestion that might have proven more troubling to American policymakers at the Cold War's height. "The world has answered Saddam's invasion with 12 United Nations resolutions, starting with a demand for Iraq's immediate and unconditional withdrawal, and backed up by forces from 28 countries of 6 continents," he said. "With few exceptions, the world now stands as one."²⁴

Even while advocating this action, GHW Bush did not abandon the American exceptionalist themes that characterized most foreign policy rhetoric. He embraced them, and pointed to their role in the current state of the world.

The conviction and courage we see in the Persian Gulf today is simply the American character in action. The indomitable spirit that is contributing to this victory for world peace and justice is the same spirit that gives us the power and the potential to meet our toughest challenges at home. We are resolute and resourceful. If we can selflessly confront the evil for the sake of good in a land so far away, then surely we can make this land all that it should be. If anyone tells you that America's best days are behind her, they're looking the wrong way.²⁵

GHW Bush identified America as great, which he asserts to be a self-evident proposal.

This greatness, identifiable in the Gulf, is translatable to the domestic front. Like Eisenhower before him, he seemed to assert that America was great because she was good.

The goodness of the U.S. was not the only feature on display in the Gulf. With the Cold War over, the Gulf War provided the perfect venue for U.N. leadership.

The courage and success of the RAF pilots, of the Kuwaiti, Saudi, French, the Canadians, the Italians, the pilots of Qatar and Bahrain—all are proof that for the first time since World War II, the international community is united. The leadership of the United Nations, once only a hoped-for ideal, is now confirming its founders' vision.²⁶

The U.N, in GHW Bush's speech, only now had the opportunity to live up the promise of its founding. Unlike the institution that became a venue for anti-Western hostility in the popular imagination, in the post-Cold War era, the U.N. was prepared for the challenges of that era.

The 2003 State of the Union Address

Unlike his father, George W. Bush paid little explicit heed to the role of the international community in the wake of the Gulf War. Instead, he relied upon the experiences of his father in the first Gulf War with reference to the significance of the international coalition that removed Iraq from Kuwait, but the younger GW Bush no longer referred to the United Nations as the essential forum in which the U.S. aligned such a coalition. GW Bush then coupled this dissociation with a historical perspective oriented in the unique challenges of the post 9/11 world and his execution of the “war on terror,” based on the success of American forces in successfully ending the rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan. GW Bush's rhetorical employment of the tragedy that occurred during his administration was highly relevant and resonant to his audience. But the younger Bush was more predisposed to a more narrow reading of the international situation, versus his father whose rhetoric acknowledged the role of past conflicts and foreign policy actions that led to the post-Cold War scene. For GW Bush, the history of

American foreign policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union was less relevant than what occurred on and after September 11, 2001.

The 2003 State of the Union address, for example, contains six references to the terms “attack” or “attacks,” versus only one such reference in the 1991 address in which reference is made to the ability to “defend against ballistic missile attacks aimed at innocent civilians.”²⁷ GW Bush described the contemporary world in more dangerous terms than the one confronted by his father, whose reference to attacks is more speculative and less premised in reality that might be recognizable to the audience. GW Bush also situates the threat posed by non-state terrorism in terms more familiar to that audience:

Throughout the 20th century, small groups of men seized control of great nations, built armies and arsenals, and set out to dominate the weak and intimidate the world. In each case, their ambitions of cruelty and murder had no limit. In each case, the ambitions of Hitlerism, militarism, and communism were defeated by the will of free peoples, by the strength of great alliances, and by the might of the United States of America.²⁸

Although the explicit reference is to “outlaw regimes” who pose “the gravest danger in the war on terror,” the suggestion is that terrorism is philosophically consistent with ideologies previously defeated by the U.S. The implicit suggestion is that the application of force that has succeeded in the past can again defeat America’s newest ideological adversary.

While much of his father’s rhetoric occasionally demonstrated the elder Bush’s diplomatic experience, GW Bush’s 2003 State of the Union Address seemed to depict the president as a caricature of masculinized Texas bravado. After describing U.S. success in the battle against Al-Qaeda through the capture and arrest of various Al-Qaeda operatives, he bragged of others not captured, saying “Let’s put it this way—they are no

longer a problem to the United States and our friends and allies.” When describing the U.S. pursuit of terrorists, he claimed, “One by one, the terrorists are learning the meaning of American justice.”²⁹

Although critics of the war might anticipate otherwise, GW Bush did not demonstrate complete disdain for his father’s diplomatic predispositions. In truth, he rhetorically embraced some of those predispositions, even when his execution of those policies did not. As his father used the United Nations as a vehicle for attaining legitimacy for U.S. action, GW Bush referenced a vague coalition to dismiss the suggestions of his own unilateralism.

We are working closely with other nations to prevent further attacks. America and coalition countries have uncovered and stopped terrorist conspiracies targeting the American embassy in Yemen, the American embassy in Singapore, a Saudi military base, ships in the Straits of Hormuz and the Straits of Gibraltar.³⁰

He ambiguously referred to these other nations simply as “coalition countries” since doing more might require troubling specificity. Aside from the vague aforementioned reference, GW Bush referred only two other times to any “coalition.” The first time GW Bush referred to a “coalition” occurred when he offered it as a coercive alternative to the United Nations should they fail to take action against Iraq (“we will lead a coalition to disarm him”).³¹ The second such reference occurred in reference to “coalition partners” in Afghanistan.

GW Bush abandoned the New World Order of the post-Cold War era in favor of a post 9/11 scene where the United Nations legitimacy was now in question. His father suggested that U.S. action in the Persian Gulf was the decisive act of a world enjoying the fruits of the Cold War’s end. The United Nations, the object of conservative scorn from the time of its inception, had a new purpose under which it could fulfill its ideals. George

H.W. Bush, the consummate realist, recast the United Nations as a Hobbesian vehicle for maintaining the international rule of law. GW Bush, on the other hand, returned to the popular conception of the U.N. that had existed prior to his father's administration, as an effete and spineless conglomeration of nations held hostage to the will of the few.

The criticism was not always explicit. Instead, it often functioned as an implicit suggestion. The younger Bush urged the U.N. to act upon its Charter: "We have called on the United Nations to fulfill its charter and stand by its demand that Iraq disarm." GW Bush never mentioned how the U.N. would fulfill the Charter, though he was presumably referring to Security Council resolution 1441. This resolution made specific reference to Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter that dealt with "Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression." However, the invocation of action extended to that resolution's pledge that Iraq "will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations of its obligations" to disarm.³²

Invoking the name of the United Nations also contrasted U.N. efforts to prevent the threat of weapons of mass destruction with the presumptive success of other anti-proliferation endeavors. These included U.S. support for the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts to "track and control nuclear materials," U.S. cooperation with other countries to "secure nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union" and similar cooperation "to strengthen global treaties banning the production and shipment of missile technologies and weapons of mass destruction."³³ GW Bush contrasted the diplomacy of the U.N. with the decisiveness of U.S. action, reassuring his audience that "America's purpose is more than to follow a process—it is to achieve a result: the end of terrible threats to the civilized world." To that end, he asked the nations of the world to join the

United States in taking action to counter the threat of terrorism, while reassuring the American public that such compliance was an unnecessary precursor for action as “the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of other.”³⁴

GW Bush suggested contempt for U.N. impotency through a series of parallel statements wherein he made the case for disarming Iraq. The first part of each statement noted an occasion in which the U.N. had reached some conclusion regarding Iraqi possession of weapons of mass destruction. The second part noted Hussein’s inaction in addressing those conclusions:

Almost three months ago, the United Nations Security Council gave Saddam Hussein his final chance to disarm. He has shown instead utter contempt for the United Nations, and for the opinion of the world. . . The United Nations concluded in 1999 that Saddam Hussein had biological weapons sufficient to produce over 25,000 liters of anthrax. . . He’s given no evidence that he has destroyed it. The United Nations concluded that Saddam Hussein had materials sufficient to produce more than 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin—enough to subject millions of people to death by respiratory failure. He hadn’t accounted for that material. He’s given no evidence that he has destroyed it.³⁵

GW Bush followed this evidence with references to U.S. intelligence reports supporting the conclusion that Hussein had failed to disarm. He urged the U.S. to act by asserting implicitly that the U.N. has failed to do so.

The 2003 State of the Union address concluded with a reference not unlike that in Lincoln’s second inaugural address. As Lincoln’s inaugural address ended, he noted the role of the Almighty in providing moral clarity. Lincoln reflected upon the appeals of both Unionists and Confederates to God. Although he offered his own implicit suggestion as to who actually held God’s favor, Lincoln noted that men should not judge their enemies, nor should they attempt to discern God’s purposes for the war:

It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God’s assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men’s faces, but let us judge not, that

we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has his own purposes.³⁶

GW Bush called freedom “God’s gift to humanity,” and went on to assert that Americans were not solely concerned with their own opinions. “We Americans have faith in ourselves,” he argued, “but not in ourselves alone.”³⁷ Like Lincoln, he reflected on the human inability to know the will of God while implicitly asserting that His will clearly lies with the United States. “We do not know,” Lincoln said, “we do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life, and all of history.”³⁸

While GW Bush’s certainty was consistent with the moral strain of American exceptionalism that remained a consistent theme in American foreign policy rhetoric, it also recalled the vague moral crusades of earlier eras so firmly opposed by realists like his father. In the current president’s discourse, the international community that arose from the end of the Cold War became nothing more than a body for Americans to disdain for failing to acquiesce to American foreign policy demands.

Ironically, the current administration has not embraced the realism of the prior administration. For instance, although one of her mentors was Brent Scowcroft, Condeleeza Rice and Scowcroft are not on speaking terms largely related to Scowcroft’s realist criticism of U.S. policy in Iraq.³⁹ Instead, idealism has dominated much of the public discourse on the war. This failure to balance that idealism, itself a product of American exceptionalism, with the rhetoric of realism has perhaps created a situation from which the administration cannot easily extricate itself.

Rhetorical critic Gregory Olson has argued that Eisenhower’s rhetorical strategy of embracing Diem and only celebrating his foreign policy successes had the unfortunate

consequence of locking Eisenhower and future administrations “into a commitment to prove the veracity of that rhetoric.”⁴⁰ The same might be said of any foreign policy that embraces the tradition of American exceptionalism without the prudential constraint of realism. While the ideal of a free and stable Iraq may be a noble enterprise, valid or not, American expectations have been tempered by the perceived impact of past experiences.

Notes

1. As this chapter addresses the rhetoric of President's George Herbert Walker Bush, 41st President of the United States and his son George Walker Bush, the 43rd, for clarity, when using last names, I will also use initials. In these cases George H.W. Bush will be referred to as GHW Bush and George W. Bush as GW Bush.
2. See Denise M. Bostdorff and Stephen R. Goldzwig, "Idealism and Pragmatism in American Foreign Policy Rhetoric: The Case of John F. Kennedy and Vietnam," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 24(1994): 515-530; and Charles Hantz, "Ideology, Pragmatism, and Ronald Reagan's World View: Full of Sound and Fury, Signifying . . .?" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26(1996): 947.
3. Timothy M. Cole, "When Intentions Go Awry: The Bush Administrations Foreign Policy Rhetoric," *Political Communication* 13(1996): 93-113; Kathleen M. German, "Invoking the Glorious War: Framing the Persian Gulf Conflict Through Directive Language," *Southern Communication Journal* 60(1995): 300; Robert L. Ivie, "Tragic Fear and the Rhetorical Presidency: Combating Evil in the Persian Gulf," in *Beyond the Rhetorical Presidency*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), 153-178; and Mary E. Stuckey, "Remembering the Future: Rhetorical Echoes of World War II and Vietnam in George Bush's Rhetoric on the Gulf War," *Communication Studies* 43(1992): 246-256.
4. George N. Dionisopoulos and Stephen R. Goldzwig, "'The Meaning of Vietnam': Political Rhetoric as Revisionist Cultural History," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78 (1992): 61-79.

5. Robert J. McMahon "Rationalizing Defeat: The Vietnam War in American Presidential Discourse," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2(1999), 539 and Kenneth Zagacki, "Rhetoric, Failure and the Presidency: The Case of Vietnam," *Communication Studies* 43 (1992): 47.
6. Edward C. Luck, "The United States, International Organizations, and the Quest for Legitimacy," in *Multilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick and Shepard Forman, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2002), 57.
7. Sonni Efron, "The Nation; The State of the Union; Bush's Foreign Policy is Cast in a Favorable Light; The President Paints Bright Pictures of Afghanistan, The Hunt for Weapons in Iraq," *Los Angeles Times*, January 21, 2004, A-20; Dana Milbank and Mike Allen, "Bush Defends Iraq War, Economic Policy: State of the Union Address Contains Few initiatives," *Washington Post*, January 21, 2004, A-1; David E. Sanger, "The State of the Union; Diplomacy; Emphasis on Iraq Remains, But From a Different Angle," *New York Times*, January 21, 2004, A-17.
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9. Richard Bendetto, "Poll: Most Support War as Last Resort," *USA Today*, November 26, 2002, A8; Richard Morin and Claudia Deane, "Support for a War with Iraq Grows After Bush's Speech; Half the Nation Favors Military Action Without U.N. Backing," *Washington Post*, February 2, 2003, A22; Gary Martin, "House Supports Battle, Bush ; Public Also Approves," *San Antonio Express-News*, March 22, 2003, 11A; Richard Bendetto, "Support for Bush, War Going Back Up," *USA Today*, December 10, 2003, 8A.
10. Robert T. Gray Jr., "Bush Should Have Taken His Father's Advice on War," *Chicago Sun-Times*, December 12, 2003, 23; Dan Chapman, "War in the Gulf: After Baghdad; Critics of Invasion Say Real Problems Will Come After War," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 6, 2003 1F; Alex Vernon, "A Strange But Familiar War," *New York Times*, April 7, 2003, A-19; Michael Kinsley, "Our Kind of Law," *Washington Post*, March 28, 2003, A23; Elisabeth Bumiller, "Whitehouse Letter; Administration is Heeding the Lessons of First Gulf War," *New York Times*, March 24, 2003, B6.
11. John M. Goshko, "U.N. Vote Authorizes Use of Force Against Iraq," *Washington Post*, November 29, 1990, A1; and Jeff Trimble, Richard Z. Chesnoff and Louise Lief, "All for War Say 'Aye'," *U.S. News and World Report*, December 3, 1990, 28. The strength of that consensus remains a subject of some dispute. Historians James F. Dunnigan and Austin Bay, for example, refer the resilience of the coalition, while political scholar Richard Melanson refers to the fragility of the coalition. See Dunnigan and Bay, *From Shield to Storm: High Tech Weapons, Military Strategy, and Coalition Warfare in the Persian Gulf* (New York:

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 13. John Mueller, *Policy and Opinion in the Gulf War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 17-24, 69-79.
 14. Todd S. Purdum and the staff of the New York Times, *A Time of Our Choosing: America's War in Iraq* (New York: Times Books, 2003), 97.
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An editor's note on page 760 indicates that the article was "Written before Operation Desert Shield."
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21. Barilleaux and Rozell, *Power and Prudence*, 74.
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24. "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume I*, 74.
25. "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume I*, 75.

26. "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union, January 29, 1991," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George Bush, 1991, Volume 1*, 79.
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28. "Address Before a Joint Session of Congress on the State of the Union, January 28, 2003," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: George W. Bush, 2003, Volume 1*, ed. Office of the Federal Register (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2004), 86-87.
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APPENDIX

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